

Gospel of Mark Chapter 13B

If you grew up in the 60's you may remember the one hit wonder from:
Zager and Evans:

"In the year 2525 if man is still alive, if woman can survive they may find..."

- There is a line in the song that says:

*"In the year 7510, if God's a comin' again He ought to make it by then,
Maybe he'll look around himself and say, guess it's time for the judgment day."*

- Those of you who are in your 30s have no idea what I am talking about.

Maybe you are a Millennial Baby and you remember the sentiments expressed by R.E.M. in 2008:

"It's the end of the world as we know it... And I feel fine."

Every once in a while Pop Culture (music or film) casts its gaze to the apocalypse.

- There are times when individuals who mistakenly set dates for the end assist Pop Culture in aligning their gaze.

Remember back in 2011 when Harold Camping the president of Family Radio was certain that the rapture and Judgment of God would take place on May 21st?

- People sold their homes gave all of their life savings to Family radio so that the message could go out into the entire world.
- And then came May 21 and then May 22nd

You may remember the hype surrounding December 12, 2012, the date that the Mayan Calendar predicted cataclysmic changes in the earth.

- And then came December 13th

False predictions by people who are obsessed with the end of time provide material for the Late Night talk shows and scoffers who jeer at the idea of divine intervention.

2 Peter 3:3, **knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. 4. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."**

- Peter assures his readers that there is in fact a Day of Judgment that will come upon the earth and God's apparent "slowness" is actually a display of his enduring patience.

When last we left the Lord Jesus, he had just climbed the Mount of Olives with his disciples and as they gazed down at the magnificent Temple of Herod Jesus initiated a conversation about the coming judgment of God.

Mark 13:1 **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?”

- Matthew’s version of the same conversation clarifies their question:

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 you break it down the disciples are actually asking 3 questions:

1. When will these things happen? (The destruction of the temple)
2. What will be the sign of your coming?
3. What will be the sign of the end of the age?

The last time I was with you we covered the first question: When will these things happen?

When will the Temple be destroyed?

- Jesus did not give his disciples an actual date for the demise of the temple instead He gave them a list of conditions, a description of what he called “the birth pains” leading up to the eventual destruction of the temple.
- They will know that the time is drawing close when they experience the pains of:
 - Destruction, Deception, Disasters and Distresses...
 - I tried to show how the NEAR events, the destruction of the Temple serve as a type and foreshadow of the FAR event, the end of the age.

Since We covered the ongoing birth pains 3 weeks ago we are going to move on to the last 2 questions: (If you missed it you can listen on line)

Question number 2: What will be the sign of your coming

- Believing that the Temple would stand until the end of time the disciples combine all three ideas in one single thought. WELL: The temple was destroyed in 70 AD but we are still waiting the coming of the Lord.

Mark 13: 14 “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.

- I am sure many of you have heard the term “the abomination of desolation” before but for the sake of those who think it sounds like something out of a Si Fi movie let me explain.
- The term describes the defilement, desecration of the Temple of God. The best example in history is when the Seleucid Leader Antiochus Ephanies sacrificed a pig on the Altar of God in the time of the Maccabees.
- Foretold in detail in Daniel 11:31.

The first place that we find the term **abomination of desolation** is in Daniel 9:

In Daniel 9 The Lord decreed 490 years for the people Israel to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness....

- 490 years of God’s dealing with Israel and then the Kingdom of God would be established.

- Toward the end of that 490 year span that corrupt individual we have come to know as the antichrist will bring an end to the sacrifices in a rebuilt temple. He will enter that temple and declare himself to be God.
- We find this in Daniel chapters 9 and 12.

Daniel 9: 27 **And he (Antichrist) shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, (7 year peace treaty in the Middle east) and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”**

- Who is this Antichrist? He is a world leader who arises in the last days.
- Daniel 7 tells us he will be extremely handsome
- Revelation 13, speaks of his charismatic personality and persuasive speech: **“He was given a mouth speaking great things.”**
- He is the prince of deceivers empowered by Satan himself.
- Daniel 9, **“Through peace he will destroy many.”**
- The Apostle Paul describes Him:

2 Thess 2: 3 **Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.**

- What do we know?

AT the midpoint of the tribulation the antichrist will bring an end the worship of the true God in Jerusalem. He will set up his own image in the temple and force everyone to worship him.

- You ay ask: HOW is this abomination of desolation a SIGN of Christ’s Second Coming?
Let’s go back to Daniel:

Daniel 12:11 **And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.**

- From the day that the Antichrist defiles the Temple there will be 3 ½ years, 42 months, a time, times and half a time, until the second coming of Christ.

We also know the abomination of desolation kicks off a 3 ½ year holocaust the likes of which the world has never seen.

- Worse than WW2 even worse than the flood of Noah.
- Jesus tells his disciples when the abomination of desolation takes place everyone in Jerusalem needs to RUN AWAY!

Mark 13: 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.

- For the sake of the Elect, the people that God has chosen for himself before the foundation of the world, men and women through whom God displays his grace, mercy and forgiveness, he will cut those days short.
- If he didn't intervene there would be NO FLESH left upon the earth.
- We are living in the first generation that has the capability of eradicating all human life from the planet. Left to ourselves we would certainly perish. BUT God will graciously intervene.
- HOW He intervenes bring us to the next question:

3. What is the sign of the end of the age?

The book of Genesis records the awesome acts of Almighty God as he brought the material universe into existence.

Genesis 1:1, **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.**

- The initial act of God's creative work at the beginning of the age was to bring forth light.
- When time has run its course at the end of the age the same God who brought forth light, the creator of the Sun the moon and the stars will turn out the lights so that darkness will cover the entire creation.

Mark 13: 24 **"But in those days, (Specific days) after that tribulation, (That specific 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.**

- Imagine the fear that will grip the hearts of men as the heavens turn totally black and the stars depart from their natural orbit.
- Gravitational forces change and the sea, which has been turned to blood is in an uproar.
- Consider the panic, the immediate chill that covers the earth when the sun no longer warms the atmosphere.
- Listen to Luke's description of this same event:

Luke 21: 25 **"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

- The Old Testament prophets also foretold this horrifying day.

Joel 2: 10 **The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. 11 The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?**

Joel 2: 30 **"And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.**

- If you have been to Crystal Cave, in the deepest part of the cave the guide turns all of the lights out and it seems that you have plunged to the heart of the earth in "Total darkness."

- It is a darkness that chills your bones. You can't see the hand in front of your face and you feel like you are all alone in the eerie blackness.

And then out of nowhere a blazing and brilliant light pierces the darkness.

Mark 13:26 **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.**

- The final sign of the consummation of the age is not something that POINTS TO the Son of Man, not a blazing cross in the darkened sky; it is the Son of Man himself coming in clouds with great glory.
- The most detailed description of his appearing is recorded for us in the Book of Revelation:

Revelation 19: 11 **Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.**

12 **His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.** 13 **He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.**

- The white horse symbolizes power and authority. IN the Roman Empire, victorious generals rode white stallions through the streets of Rome in triumphal procession.
- In this case the white horse symbolizes the spotless, unblemished absolutely holy nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- He is coming to establish his rule therefore, **“On his head are many diadems.”**
- His eyes are a flame of fire denoting the fury of his judgment.
- Because He is **faithful and true** His judgments are perfect and righteous.

I am reminded of the words from the book of Hebrews:

Heb 10: 31 **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

- Finally: Jesus points to NATURE and the obvious changing of the seasons

Mark 13:28 **“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.**

29 **So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.**

30 **Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.**

31 **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.**

To OUR Generation, Experiencing the global proliferation of radical Islam.

- The first generation with the unique capability to destroy all flesh.
- The generation who will probably see a nuclear Iran.
- A generation living when a nation (China) can field an army of 200 million troops.
- The generation who has experienced more natural and man made disasters than any other generation.
- How should WE respond to Jesus' teaching:

Lu 21:28 **Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”**

- Pay attention! That doesn't mean that your eyes are glued to the NEWS. Pay attention to the Word of God..

- Keep short accounts with God. Walk in humility and truth, be quick to repent and rejoice in the forgiveness that comes through Jesus Christ.
- If you have not repented of your sins and believed on the Lord Jesus: **NOW is the time, TODAY is the day of salvation.**