

Destruction of the Temple

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles again and turn to the book of Mark. Book of Mark in chapter 13.! I will be reading from verses 1 through to verse 23. Mark chapter 13. Mark chapter 13.

This is the word of God. As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, Look, teacher, what massive stones, what magnificent buildings. Do you see all these great buildings? replied Jesus. Not one stone here will be left on another. Every one will be thrown down. As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled? Jesus said to them, Watch out that no one deceives you.

Many will come in my name, claiming, I am he, and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places and famines.

These are the beginning of birth pains. You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me, you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel first must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever it is giving you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.

All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you see the abomination that causes desolation, standing where it does not belong, let the reader understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.

[2 : 2 3] How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Pray that this will not take place in winter because those will be the days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world until now and never to be equaled again. If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. At that time, if anyone says to you, look, here is Christ, or look, there he is, do not believe it.

For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect, if that were possible. So be on your guard. I have told you everything ahead of time.

Well, it's still Tuesday of Passion Week. And as Jesus is leaving the temple for the last time, his disciples call his attention to the magnificent temple complex and point out the massive stones of white marble. They're impressed. And in response, Jesus prophesies the total destruction of that temple, saying, not one stone will be left upon another. Everyone will be thrown down.

He's not impressed with the building in which people worship. He's impressed with those who worship him in spirit and in truth, whatever the building is. And they were not worshipping God, as we've seen in the most recent chapters of Mark's gospel. And so this building, in which you trust, and in which you boast, will be level without one stone standing on another.

Well, they walk across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives, where they can turn back and look then at Jerusalem and the temple shining in the sun. And the disciples have had some time to think about this bombshell that's just been dropped on them. And now they ask, Jesus, tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to happen? And so Jesus' discourse here in Mark chapter 13, Matthew 24, Luke 21 is arguably some of the most difficult words of Jesus to interpret.

[5 : 01] It's prophetic discourse. It draws upon many Old Testament prophetic passages, even some apocalyptic language, which means it needs to be interpreted as apocalyptic and prophetic language, with many symbols and many pictures. And the many different views of the book of Revelation, the apocalyptic, shows us just how difficult it is to understand some of these prophetic statements.

In this chapter, our Lord Jesus prophesies of two great events, one already fulfilled in our time. It's already been fulfilled. It happened in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the temple, even as Jesus has just predicted. The other event, which is yet to come, is the return of Christ at the end of the age.

And in this chapter, Jesus is speaking of those two events. Now, it's complicated to understand just what Jesus is speaking of. Is he speaking of the 70 AD destruction of the temple, or is he speaking of the return of Christ at the end of the age?

Partly because of what the disciples asked Jesus. Matthew gives a fuller picture of the question they asked. They asked in Matthew chapter 24, when will this happen, the destruction of the temple?

And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age? Clearly, the disciples thought in their mind that these two events are going to happen at the same time. To see this glorious temple destroyed can mean only one thing.

[6 : 55] The end of the age at Christ's return is upon us when that happens. We know that they were wrong because the temple was destroyed in 70 AD.

And Christ has not come back at the end of the age. It's been 2,000 years and counting. Now, we can understand how his disciples could think that this would all happen at once.

When the Old Testament prophets spoke about the coming of Christ, they did not distinguish between his first coming and his second coming. They spoke of it together.

They lumped it all together. Micah chapter 5, verse 2, But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, and out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

Any idea what he's talking about? The birth of Jesus, the king of the Jews, born where? In Bethlehem Ephrathah. But two verses later, he speaks of these who will be shepherded by this ruler, and they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth, and he will be their peace.

[8 : 22] Universal peace will not happen until the prince of peace returns. But here he speaks of the birth of Jesus and the universal peace of Jesus in one breath, as if it's to happen when he comes.

You have the same thing in Isaiah chapter 9, those familiar verses, for unto us a child is born, and so on. And of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end.

His birth, the increase of his peace, universal peace, eternal peace. Well, we know that there's been at least 2,000 years between those two events, but they are often spoken of by the prophets in one breath, as if they happened together.

This is called, by various names, prophetic telescoping, prophetic foreshortening. It's the idea of, say you see a mountain from a far distance, and it's got two peaks on that mountain, and you start driving toward the mountain, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 miles to that mountain.

And when you get close to the mountain, you realize it's not one mountain with two peaks. It's two mountains. And there's many miles between the first one and the second one.

[9 : 50] But from a distance, it looked like one. And that's the way the Holy Spirit inspired his prophets to speak of the coming of Christ.

Very often, it was as if it's just one coming. Indeed, Peter says that even those who were given the Spirit of Christ to speak about the coming Christ, they didn't understand.

They were trying to sort out the times and the seasons of Jesus' sufferings and glory. They didn't realize that, yes, he will suffer in his first coming, and then the glories will follow in his second coming.

So we can forgive the disciples if they think that, oh, if the temple's going to be destroyed, that's going to be the end of it. Christ will return. Christ will return, and it will be the end of the age.

Then there's also the idea of types in the Old Testament prophecy, where two events are related, closely related to each other, where the earlier event or person is a type foreshadowing a later event or person.

[11 : 01] So we have that kind of thing in 2 Samuel 7. Remember, God made a promise to David that he would have a son who would sit on his throne. Well, that happened immediately with Solomon, his son.

But you keep reading, and you realize, oh, this son is going to reign forever and ever, and his kingdom will never end. And you realize, oh, we're talking about none other than Jesus, the greater son of David, the root and offspring of David.

And so we see that, yes, Solomon first came, fulfilling that passage, but he was foreshadowing another son of David who would come and whose kingdom would be forever.

So there's something of a multiple fulfillment of some of the prophecies. And that can make things even more interesting. So the destruction of the temple and Christ coming at the end of the age are clearly connected ideas, events, though they are not happening at the same time.

They are both events of God's wrath, God's judgment being poured out upon guilty sinners. And the earlier event of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple foreshadows and forewarns about a coming judgment when Jesus Christ returns at the end of the age.

[12 : 28] Now that coming is clearly a day of wrath and punishment. 2 Peter 3, 7, When the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

When will that happen? When Jesus returns. 2 Peter 3, 1 to 7. Romans 2, 5, The day of the Lord is called the day of God's wrath when His righteous judgment will be revealed.

Revelation 7, 15 and 16. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains.

They called on the mountains and the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne. And from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of their wrath has come.

And who can stand? So the clear teaching of Scripture is that Jesus Christ is coming back to save His people and to judge with His wrath all who have not repented and believed on Him.

[13 : 39] That coming will be a day of wrath and judgment. But so was the coming of judgment at the destruction of Jerusalem's temple.

Jesus speaks of it as God's judgment on the nation that rejected Him and was to crucify Him in just three days forward. This wasn't the first time He prophesied its coming destruction.

Just two days earlier on Palm Sunday when He rode into Jerusalem and the crowd is shouting their joys and receiving Him as the King, the Messiah.

And as they're coming toward Jerusalem they come around a bend and from that bend you could see Jerusalem spread out with the temple shining. And Jesus starts weeping.

What a scene. Jubilant shouts. Weeping Savior. Rejoicing in the King. And the King is sobbing.

[14 : 50] Luke says when He saw the city He wept over it and said if you, even you, had only known on this day what would have brought you peace but now it's hidden from your eyes.

The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground.

You and your children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.

He came to them in the person of Jesus Christ. And they did not recognize Him. They refused to honor Him as King, as Lord, as God and would crucify Him come Friday.

And Jesus knows that is the final straw. That is going to be the final straw that will bring God to visit them in a horrific judgment with no mercy shown to young or old and not one stone left on another including the temple.

[15 : 59] And Jesus weeps at this awful judgment coming upon Jerusalem sinners who will condemn Him and crucify Him.

Just three days from this Tuesday, Jesus will be beaten and flogged and making His way outside the city to Golgotha. And a large number of people will be following Him and many women who mourn and weep for Him.

After all, He is one of our Jewish sons being tortured to death by the Romans. And they mourn.

And Jesus turns to them and He says, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.

Then they will begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us and to the hills, cover us. For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?

[17 : 13] So the temple's destruction and Christ's return are related events. They're both God's wrath and judgment poured out on sinners. But they do not happen at the same time, though the disciples assumed they would.

The former is a type and warning of the other. Jude 7 says, This is true of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah many hundreds of years earlier.

They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. This is a picture of what will happen when Christ returns and cast sinners into eternal fire.

They are a specimen, a type, an example of the coming final judgment. So with the flood at Noah's day, those things pointed to the coming judgment when Christ returns at the end of the age.

And so does the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Jerusalem. So the disciples' primary question was, when will these things happen? Meaning the destruction of the temple and at the same time Christ return at the end of the age.

[18 : 27] They also want to know the sign that these things are all about to happen. So where does Jesus begin? Answering their question.

Well, it's not where we might think he would. He starts by telling them about all the fearful world events that are not time markers of his return and of the end. We saw it last time in verses 5 to 13.

Jesus talked about many false messiahs who would deceive many people. He talked about wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines, plagues, about their preaching of the gospel to all nations that would be met with severe persecution, hatred, betrayal by family members, arrested, flogged, brought to trial, put to death.

And he speaks of these things. Not as signs of the end, of his return, but that these things are the things that will happen all through this period from my first coming to my last coming.

Very often during that period, people have thought of these things as signs that the end is upon us and they've led to much hysteria. And Jesus is concerned that when his disciples see these fearful things happening, they'll jump to the conclusion that these kind of events prove that the coming of Jesus is right at hand.

[19 : 59] the end of the age. Jesus says, no, it is not the end. These things must happen and they must happen before the end, but they are not time signs that mark the fact that if you see this happening, you know the end is here.

No, the end is yet to come, verse 7. These are just the beginning of birth pains, verse 8. In fact, they are things that have happened for the last 2,000 years.

They mark all this age. The book of Acts immediately starts showing these things happening and they've continued to happen for 2,000 years.

They don't mark the timing of Jesus' return. And that's something we need to know to guard against all the end times madness taught by many who say that these things are the sign of the end.

Well, that's all review, bringing us through the first 13 verses. Today, we'll see Jesus begin to correct their wrong idea that it's all going to happen at once.

[21 : 11] Temple destroyed, Christ coming at the end of the age. Can you think what confusion that would have created? It's around 30 A.D., just 40 years later.

the temple will be obliterated. It will be brought down as Jesus here prophesies. And they're going to think he's coming back now.

This is the sign of the end. And he won't come. He hasn't come for 2,000 years. Can you see how it would have caused the disciples' faith to fail?

He said he'd become it. Where is he? So Jesus is not going to leave them with that wrong idea. And in our text, Jesus is going to start to differentiate between these two events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D.

and his return at the end of the age. And he starts by talking about when the temple will be destroyed and the signs that that is about to happen. That's what we're covering this morning in our passage verses 14 to 23.

[22 : 20] 23. He does give some time markers for this event, the destruction of Jerusalem, the abomination that causes desolation, the armies encircling Jerusalem.

All these things will happen during this generation. And indeed it all did happen within 40 years, just as Jesus said it would. The temple was destroyed.

Then next week or next time we'll see how Jesus contrasts that event with his coming at the end of the age of which he gives no time markers since no one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven nor the sun, but only the father.

So the word to you is always be ready, always be alert whenever it happens. So verses 14 to 23 this morning.

The first thing we see is the sign that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is at hand. Verse 14 says, when you see the abomination that causes desolation, standing where it does not belong, let the reader understand, then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

[23 : 30] Here's the signal, giving them the warning to flee. Some abominable sacrilege, a grossly profane misuse of the temple, idolatrous affront to the true worship of God, who dwelt in the most holy place and was to be worshipped as holy.

That will bring the judgment of God on the temple and make it desolate. This language is taken from Daniel 9, 26 and 27, where it says a ruler will come and destroy the city and the sanctuary on a wing of the temple.

He will set up an abomination that causes desolation. So that's where this language comes from. And that was immediately fulfilled the first time, I shouldn't say immediately, but it was fulfilled the first time in 168 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted the Jews, warring against them, came and he desecrated the temple.

He erected an altar to Zeus over the altar of burnt offering and sacrificed swine upon that altar, unclean animals, thus defiling the temple.

But now Jesus is using that expression and in use of it is saying that has not been totally fulfilled in 168 BC.

[24 : 52] There's coming another sacrilege, another abominable use of the temple. And he doesn't state exactly what that sacrilege would be, but that's the sign that they're to flee and they would know it as Mark adds, let the reader understand.

The reader will understand when he sees the sacrilege. That's the signal to run. Now Luke's account ties it to the period of the Jewish Roman Wars from 66 to 70 AD.

Luke's account says of Jesus speaking, when you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Let those in the city get out and those in the country not enter the city, for this is the time of punishment and fulfillment of all that has been written. God had sent his prophets for a long time to call Israel to repentance.

And they mistreated and they murdered the prophets. So God sent more prophets and them they mistreated and murdered. And finally he sent his own son and him they crucified.

[26 : 14] Judgment had been threatened. It had been a long time coming. God was patient. He was slow to anger. But that did not lead them to repentance as they continued on in their rebellion against God and in their misuse of the very temple and worship of God.

He is now coming in judgment via the Roman armies. coming to tear down their beloved temple in which they trusted for their rejection of Christ, the true temple, the stone that the builders rejected.

Our Lord has just cleansed the temple, remember? He did it when he first, three years earlier. And now he does it again three years later. Just a day, two days before this discourse.

He cleansed it. You saw the mess that it was. There wasn't worship of God going on there. He turned it into a den of robbers. And earlier this very Tuesday, the same day he's giving this discourse, Jesus had said to the religious leaders in his last visit to the temple, you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

So fill up then the measure of your forefathers. Therefore, I'm sending you prophets and wise men and teachers, his own disciples, his own people. And some of them you will kill and crucify.

[27 : 37] Others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth from the first martyr, the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, the last martyr in the Old Testament, whom you murdered between the, you murdered, between the temple and the altar.

I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. Now, Jesus had just said that earlier this same day. You're one with your fathers in your hatred of God's call through the prophets.

You killed them, and now you're going to kill the prophets. Oh, Jerusalem, Jesus said. Jerusalem, you who killed the prophets and stoned those sent to you.

How often I longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate.

Your house, this temple in which he was preaching that day, it's no longer God's house. It's no longer my father's house, which is meant to be a house of prayer for all nations. You have defiled it with your bloody hands, and so now the temple is left to you.

[28 : 55] There it is. It's yours, not his. It's deserted. It's abandoned by God. The glory has departed. Ichabod is written over this temple.

It's ripe for judgment, just as you worshipers are. Those were his last words in the temple before leaving it, and then entering into this discourse with his disciples alone.

So in our text, Jesus tells his disciples in private that God's judgment is coming, and this is the second point. If you're going to escape, you must run for your life.

Verse 14, then those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

So Jerusalem's a walled city. It's a great fortress. It's praised in Scripture, in the Psalms, as a place of shelter and safety. When an enemy approached, all the people who gathered in the area would run inside of Jerusalem, behind the walls for protection.

[29 : 59] But now, it's all given over by God to the Romans. He's forsaken the place. And to run into the city for safety is to run into a bloodbath, to disaster, because the Romans were going to come and besiege the city and circle it around so that those locked inside would die of starvation or slaughter.

Don't run into the city. Run from it, he says. Notice the urgency of the command in verse 15. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to enter the house to take anything out.

These were flat roofed homes and someone would be up on the top of the top story there. And he says, if you see this mark, this sign, don't even go down into the house to get your things.

Run for it. Forget your things or it could be too late. And he says again in verse 16, let no one out in the field go back to get his cloak. Better to live without a coat than to die in it.

Run for your life. You see, Jerusalem has become the city of destruction. Kids, you read pilgrim's progress. You know, that's where Christian lived.

- [31 : 17] The pilgrim lived and he got a burden of sin as he read the Bible and saw he was a sinner before God and he realized, I am living in the city of destruction. So he set out to flee the destruction of that city.

You remember how his family and his neighbors came out and they called him back. Come back. Come back. Come back. Remember what he did? He put his fingers in his ears and he ran crying, life, life, eternal life.

When you see the armies of Rome flee, flee for your life and that's a picture you see of the coming destruction of God.

God, what's holding you back from running to Christ, the only refuge from God's wrath. Jesus says it's better to lose your life, to lose life your way, life like I want it to be, than to lose your own soul.

You too must flee to Christ for your life. Blessed are all those who take refuge in him, not in the cursed city of destruction. the urgency of the command to flee.

- [32 : 38] It's due to the severity of God's judgment that's coming. Verse 17, how dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers. What a tender concern Christ has for women.

Think of having to flee with a baby at your breast. to run for your life with a growing baby in your womb. Kids, think of one of these big watermelons that mom buys at the store.

If that were strapped to your stomach and you're running for your life, not good. And so, how dreadful it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers if this destruction of Jerusalem and the temple happens when they are in that state.

You know, to be barren in Israel was a most unwelcome thing. It was even a disgrace in Israel. Yet, so dreadful will that day be that the barren ones will be called the blessed ones.

Those that never nurse children will be called, you are in the happier state. Why? Because they will escape with their lives and not have to run with children both inside and outside of the womb.

- [34 : 09] And then he says this, showing the severity of God's judgment. Pray that this will not take place in winter, verse 18. Winter was the time of cold weather. You're not to go back for your cloak and now you're out here and it's cold weather.

That wouldn't be good. But also because winter was the season of rains that would flood the rivers and even make some of them uncrossable, perhaps keeping them from escaping to a safe place.

Pray that it won't take place in winter. Verse 19 and 20 show the severity of this time because those will be days of distress, unequaled from the beginning when God created the world until now and never to be equaled again.

If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.

Jesus is saying these days will be so devastating that no one would survive if the Lord didn't cut those days short, that all would die of this violent death, but that he has cut those days short for the sake of his elect whom he has chosen.

- [35 : 25] Jesus believed in the doctrine of election. He refers to his saints as the elect, those chosen by God, which Paul says were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world, Ephesians 1.4.

And oh, what a heart Jesus has for his elect. And he knows what they can bear, and he will not tempt them beyond what they are able to bear, but will even shorten those days for the elect's sake.

Well, the whole surrounding context of these words is the events around Jerusalem in 70 AD, not some period at the end of the age when Jesus returns.

It really was a horrific massacre of the Jews. As Josephus, the Jewish historian records, and the apostle Paul records in 1 Thessalonians 2.16, this was the wrath of God coming upon them to the uttermost, to the utmost, to the furthest extreme.

This was a world changing event. since God had chosen the Jews and chose to dwell among them in the temple. This is a whole history-changing event, a whole new covenant.

[36 : 51] The covenant with Israel, the old covenant is replaced with the new covenant. Unbelieving Jews are pruned out of the covenant people of God.

And believing Gentiles and believing Jews are the ones who are the people, the elect of God. And so this is, there's nothing like it in history.

And there are references in history that say many of the Christians did heed the Savior's command, and they did flee east across the Jordan River to Pella in Perea, where they found refuge from the Roman armies.

But Josephus also records that sadly many Jews ran into Jerusalem for cover, just like they often had done, only to be besieged for five months and starved to death.

You see, the farmlands and the gardens, the produce was grown outside of Jerusalem. And every day they'd bring the produce into the marketplace and sell it to the people of Jerusalem.

[38 : 02] Jerusalem. But the Romans besieged the city, and they didn't let anything come in for five months. Are you ready to live for five months with what you've got in your freezer?

Maybe some of you, but they didn't have freezers. You know, it got so desperate that they began to eat their flesh and blood. horrible days.

And if you got so weak and hungry that you surrendered and went out to the Romans, they crucified you. Josephus says as many as 500 a day. And if you stayed inside, it was to starve to death.

There were no good choices. And finally, when the Romans came and broke through the wall after five months, there was a bloodbath. 1.1 million Jews either died from starvation, crucifixion, or the sword, according to Josephus.

The wrath of God had come upon them to the uttermost, and the temple that they trusted in was leveled. And it's still gone.

[39 : 20] Remember what happened the moment Jesus died? He said, it's finished. Into your hands I commit my spirit. And he breathed his last and died. And immediately, that thick temple that kept people out of the Holy of Holies was torn in two from top to bottom.

There's no need for this temple anymore. It's leveled and it will never be rebuilt. The temple being rebuilt is the people of God. The judgment of God has fallen upon this temple.

Lastly, Jesus gives further warnings. You see, there is a payday for profaning the worship of God, profaning the temple, crucifying the Lord of glory.

And Jesus is giving these urgent instructions to his disciples that they might pass on to the rest of the church to run for their lives when they see these signs. And lastly, he gives further warnings about false Christ pretending to be the Messiah.

Verses 21 to the end, to 23. At that time, if anyone says to you, look here, is the Christ. Look there, he is. Do not believe it. For false Christ and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect.

[40 : 42] And if that were possible, so be on your guard. I told you all things ahead of time. Didn't Jesus already warn them about false Christ?

Yes, he did, but that was before he told them about the destruction of Jerusalem. This unequal distress and trouble that will come upon the people, and he knows that that event will occasion more false Christ to take advantage of the situation, claiming to be the Messiah Savior that the nation now needs.

And the terrible distress will make the people all the more susceptible to a false Messiah, especially when these pretenders perform signs and miracles to prove that they are the Messiah.

Not all miracles are performed by God. And these will be able to perform miraculous signs and wonders to back up their claim to be the Messiah.

So deceiving that even the elect would be deceived, if that were possible. The only reason they will not be deceived is because God will keep them from being deceived, as he cares for his own.

[41 : 56] Matthew's account gives further words that Jesus said at this point to show that this was not the end. He says, so if anyone tells you there he is, out in the desert, do not go out.

Or here he is in the inner rooms, some secret place. Do not believe it. Why not? Because his coming will be so obvious that you won't need anyone to tell you where he is.

Jesus goes on to say, for as lightning that comes from the east is visible in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

There's nothing secret about it at all. He's coming with the clouds and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. Don't confuse these terribly distressing times, my disciple, as the end.

No, they are God's judgment upon Israel, her capital city, her temple, her people in unbelief. But they are not a time marker for my coming or the end of the age.

[43 : 12] Get it straight, disciples. The church is going to need to hear from you the sign to flee at the destruction of Jerusalem. And they should not be thinking that that's when I'm going to come.

Tell them the truth. Don't confuse these two. So the next time, we'll continue to see Jesus continue to distinguish these two events as he goes on to give teaching about his return at the end of the age.

So just in conclusion, do you see Jesus' concern in this discourse? His aim is to prevent premature excitement about his return at the end of the age. Commentator R.T.

France says the whole chapter aims to damp down rather than promote an expectation of the immediate end of the age. Jesus is throwing a wet blanket, not gasoline, on end times hysteria.

Frightening world events are not markers that the end has come, but are features that are found throughout this period from Christ's first coming to his second coming.

[44 : 18] Sadly, these words of Jesus has not been heeded by many who point to these very things. The wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes and famines as signs that the end is upon us.

So don't listen. Don't get carried away with such teaching. Not even the horrific destruction of the temple and what would happen if that event is a sign that Jesus is coming.

It's been 2,000 years. So he's telling you, don't try to figure out the time of my coming, but rather be alert. Always be ready. Always be on guard.

Take heed to yourself, lest in fear you deny Christ in order to escape persecution. Lest you be among the many who fall away. No, be among those who endure to the end.

Stay close to Christ. Walk in his ways. And then notice second, Jesus' concern for his elect to help them to run for the escape from Jerusalem's destruction.

[45 : 22] Oh, he cares about them and he gives them time markers. When you see this happening, flee. And then thirdly, this judgment of God in 70 AD is a forewarning of the coming judgment of God when Jesus returns at the end of the age.

It's not a time marker that the end of the age is upon us, but it is a warning that the end is coming. All these things, every war, every rumor of war, every earthquake, every famine, is a warning to the world.

I mean what I say. I will judge sin. I will pour out my wrath for all who are not in Christ the Savior.

Peter says scoffers will come saying, where is this coming? He promised. Everything goes on as it has from the beginning. My friend, don't misinterpret God's patience as being indifferent toward your sin and rejection of his son.

As if he has no coming day of wrath and eternal punishment for sin. No, no. He's loving. He's kind. He'd never do that. If the judgment of 70 AD is such a horrendous thing to flee, what will be the everlasting wrath that he comes to pour out on sinners outside of Christ?

[46 : 47] If Christ had returned yesterday, where would you be today? Rejoicing with the Savior or weeping and wailing in hell with no escape.

Sinner and friend, if you're going to escape the wrath of God, there's only one place to flee. It's to Christ. It's to Christ who saves us from the coming wrath. Because there, just three days after this speech, he will be nailed to a cross, not only receiving the worst that man can do to him, but he will receive the infinite wrath of God that sin deserves.

And so you see, there's two places where God's wrath and judgment falls. It falls on Calvary's middle cross, on the Savior, the Son of God, who bears it in the place of his people, all who trust in him.

Or it will fall everlastingly in hell upon sinners outside of Christ. You see, if we come to a passage like this and we view it as some mental exercise to try to figure out the signs of the end times, we miss the whole point.

Jesus is not bringing these things to our attention that we might get all wrapped up in trying to figure out when he's coming. We'll see more of that next week. Jesus didn't even know, he said, his coming.

[48 : 17] So don't you be trying to figure it out. You be ready. That's the emphasis of this passage. Watch out. There are many deceivers, many false religions, many lies of the devil, many persecutions to make you abandon Christ.

Walk with him. Guard yourself. Live holy. And be ready at any time to welcome him. Should he come this day?

Don't miss the point of Mark chapter 13. Jesus wants us to be ready at his coming. His arms are open to receive all who come to him.

The Bible has a question for you to answer, my friend. Hebrews 2, 3. How will you escape if you neglect so great a salvation? Here he is, your salvation.

Christ being damned under the wrath of God on Calvary. And how will you escape hell if you neglect this so great Savior and salvation?

[49 : 33] Well, you won't. You won't. That's the answer of the Bible. You must come to him. Run to him today. He's ready to receive you and turns none away.

It is beneath the cross that we prepare to meet him, trusting in the Savior who died there for everyone who flees to him. like those Thessalonian sinners who turn to God to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath.

Amen. Amen.