

(Through the Bible) Mark 13

by Chuck Smith

Jesus warns of the destruction of the temple, the rise of false prophets, and the great tribulation period, and encourages believers to persevere and flee to the wilderness for safety.

Duration: 45:57

Scripture: Mark 13:1-2, Mark 13:8-11, Mark 13:28-29, Mark 13:31, Acts 4:5-7, Acts 6:8-15, Acts 26:1-2

Topics: "End Times", "Perseverance"

Description

In this sermon, Jesus is urging his followers to be watchful and ready for his return, as the exact timing is unknown. He compares his return to a master of a house who could come at any time, whether it be evening, midnight, or morning. Jesus emphasizes the importance of being alert and prepared. He also warns of the challenges and persecution that believers will face, including betrayal and hatred for his name's sake. Jesus encourages endurance and assures that those who endure to the end will be saved. He also mentions the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet and advises those in Judea to flee when they see it. Jesus predicts world wars, earthquakes, famines, and troubles as the beginning of sorrows. He foretells that his followers will be delivered up, beaten, and brought before rulers and kings for his sake. Jesus emphasizes the need for the gospel to be published to all nations before these events occur. He advises his followers not to worry about what to say when they are delivered up, as the Holy Spirit will give them the words to speak. Overall, Jesus urges his followers to be vigilant, endure hardships, and spread the gospel before his return.

Transcript

Mark's Gospel, chapter 13. And as Jesus went out of the temple, one of his disciples said unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings. Referring to the great temple in Jerusalem that was started in the year 2219 B.C. by Herod the Great.

It became one of the wonders of the ancient world. It took over 50 years to construct. Herod the Great was never able to complete it himself.

Herod the Great, as we have mentioned before, was fond of using great stones in his building projects. But according to Josephus, some of the greatest stones that he used in his building projects were used in the temple itself. Josephus records that some of the stones were 47 feet long, 8 feet high, and 12 feet thick.

Now that seemed preposterous and just totally unreal until recent archaeological excavations that have been going on along the western wall, down at the southwest corner of the western wall. They have found these tremendous cornerstones that are about 35 feet long, about 6 feet high and 8 feet thick. But then as they were excavating along the western wall towards the fortress of Antonio, they've come across a huge stone.

It's about 45 feet long. I stood beside the thing. It's about 10 feet thick and about 8 feet tall.

Almost as large as some of those that he used in the temple building itself. They estimate that these stones weigh up to 400 tons. They still marvel at how they were able to hew out these stones, carve them so perfectly smooth, and then move them in place.

How they actually got them into place is still a mystery. It is a matter of speculation. But they're not really certain how in the world they could ever move such large stones and get them in place in a building.

These stones are so perfectly hewn out that they did not need mortar between them. They just lie flat one on another. And even to the present day with all of the erosion, you take a knife blade and you try to insert it between the stones and they're so perfectly carved you can't push a knife blade in.

The building was then, the dome of the building was then covered with sheets of gold so that in looking at the building it reflected the sun and it was just like, look, you couldn't really look at it if you were in that angle where the sun would reflect and hit your eyes. Brilliant building. One of the marvels of the ancient world.

So as the disciples were coming out of the temple they were noting these huge stones and this marvelous building that was constructed by Herod. At this point having begun some 20 years before the birth of Christ and Christ now being around 33 years old take off the four years that they feel is an error in the calendar and you get the, there were about 47 years in construction at this point. So the building was pretty well completed.

It only took another 18 years to finish it. And Jesus answering said unto him, you see this great building? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. Now, I imagine that that particular prediction seemed rather preposterous to the disciples.

However, some 40 years later when Titus came in and conquered Jerusalem once they were able to enter the city the last citadel, the strongest fortress was the temple itself, the strongest building in the city. And so many of the Jews fled to the temple in order to hold off the Roman legion from within the temple. Titus ordered that they just not destroy the temple but to leave it intact.

However, some of the Roman soldiers, drunken began to fire arrows at the temple, flaming arrows and the temple caught fire and the Jews inside were cremated. But the intense heat of the fire melted the gold of the dome and it being melted came on down and filled the cracks of the stones. And so then the Roman troops in order to loot the gold took the temple down stone upon stone until the prophecy of Jesus was literally fulfilled.

Not one stone was left standing upon another. As you go to Jerusalem today and you look down into the excavations in the Teropian Valley you can see in one area where they have dug all the way down to the Roman road that was there at the time of Christ. And there on that Roman road at the time of Christ you can see huge stones lying just as they were broken as they were pushed over from the temple mount

probably some of the temple stones that were pushed over and filled the Teropian Valley and you see them lying just as they fell.

Mute testimony to the accuracy of the prediction of Jesus Christ. For exactly as he said not one stone was left standing upon another. Now it should be noted that he made that prediction of the Herodian temple.

They do feel that there are probably foundation stones of Solomon's temple still existing somewhere on the temple mount. And right now there is a tremendous move to seek to find the foundation of Solomon's temple. And Stanford Research Institute has been hired to use a radar type devices to probe under the surface of the temple mount and to make a model showing the tunnels and the foundation stones and they're able to distinguish these things with this new type of testing units.

And they are hoping to discover the foundation stones of Solomon's temple and if they do then there will be a gigantic push to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. There is already a gigantic push underway by many Jews. I received interesting fascinating mail from Samuel Goldfoot who is the head of the Temple Mount Foundation.

And this man and his group have dedicated their lives to the rebuilding of the temple which of course is extremely exciting from a biblical prophetic standpoint. Now as he sat down on the Mount of Olives so they left the Temple Mount area crossed through the Kidron Valley and over towards Bethany probably going up the Mount of Olives it is a pretty steep mountain going up and it isn't bad idea to stop and rest halfway up or more. And so he went over with his disciples to the Mount of Olives and he sat down.

And Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when will these things be? That is the destruction of the temple. And what will be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? Or the completion of prophecy? And Jesus answering them began to say, Now take heed lest any man deceive you. The first thing that Jesus warned against were deceivers.

It is interesting how that all the way through the New Testament the church was warned of deceivers, warned of false prophets. That has been the curse of the church. Men who have sought to profit off of the gospel of Jesus Christ, sought personal profit and gain.

There are so many charlatans, wolves in sheep's clothing. And Jesus warns them against those deceivers. For many shall come in my name saying, I am the Messiah and shall deceive many.

Moon declares himself to be the Messiah. I am amazed that people would follow him. And yet there are thousands of people selling peanuts and flowers so that he might reap the profit to live in these palatial mansions.

When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don't be troubled. For such things must needs be. The end is not yet.

But then nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. This from the Greek is speaking of a worldwide state of war. It's just something different from the wars and rumors of wars that have been going on the whole while.

A world war, earthquakes in different places, famines and troubles. These are the beginning of sorrows. But take heed to yourselves.

For they will deliver you up into the councils, into the synagogues. You will be beaten. You shall be brought before the rulers and kings for my sake and for a testimony against them.

And the gospel must first be published unto all nations. But when they shall lead you and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what you shall speak. Neither do you premeditate, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour that speak.

For it is not you that will speak, but the Holy Spirit. So, this prophecy of Jesus was surely fulfilled. And in the book of Acts, we read how that they were brought before the magistrates, how they were beaten, how they were brought before the councils, before the rulers.

And Paul the Apostle even stood before King Agrippa and later before Nero himself. But Jesus said, don't worry about what you're going to say. And we find an interesting story in the book of Acts how that Stephen was brought before the council.

And how he began to rehearse to them their history. And how that as he was speaking, his face began to shine like an angel's. As the anointing of God's Spirit rested upon Stephen.

And yet the people were so incensed by the things that he was saying that finally they gnashed upon him with their teeth and drug him out and stoned him to death. Now, a lot of people wonder about this particular prophecy. The gospel must first be published among all nations.

And there are many mission groups that take this as more or less the impetus for their mission program. And they claim that we can hasten the return of Jesus Christ by advancing the missionary program. For the gospel must be preached into all nations before the end comes.

Paul the Apostle when he was writing to the Colossian church some 30 years after the death of Christ said to the church in his letter and the gospel which has come to you as it is into all the world. Paul claimed that by the time he had written that letter to the Colossian church the gospel had gone into all the world. There are churches in India today that trace their origin back to the disciple Thomas.

According to tradition, Thomas went to India and preached the gospel and there is in India today the Church of Thomas one of the largest churches in India. Christian works is the Church of Thomas and they trace their roots back to Thomas himself. The gospel was spread by the early church filling the earth.

Really their endeavors are a real testimony against us today. For they did not have the modern methods that are available to us. When I read of Paul's journeys and how this guy traveled with the gospel of Jesus Christ I wonder what he would have done in the jet age.

You know, with radio and TV and jets and all. Man, that guy would have been unstoppable. Because he had to walk and take boats and so forth and all.

And yet the territory that that fellow covered. What a witness against us. Now, not only did Paul say that the gospel was preached into all the world by the time he had written to the Colossians, but in the 14th chapter of the book of Revelation, John in verse 6 said, I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.

So during the last days, in the tribulation period, God is going to be using angels flying through the midst of heaven to declare the everlasting gospel to every nation, language, tribe, people. So that it is not a prerequisite to the coming of Jesus for His church to get the gospel preached into all of the world. You cannot say, well, the Lord can't rapture the church tonight because the gospel hasn't yet been preached in all the world.

And Jesus said it's got to be preached into all the world before the end comes. That's not a valid argument. Because the gospel will be preached and this prophecy of Christ will be fulfilled, but not necessarily by the church.

And Jesus didn't say that they were going to have to proclaim the gospel. He just said it would be proclaimed among all nations. Now, some people see the angel flying through the midst of heaven as one of these little Telstar communication satellites.

And who knows when John saw this thing flying through the midst of heaven and preaching to everyone all over the world. Who knows, but John thought it was an angel. When in the vision, he saw this thing going and the voice was coming to all men with the gospel.

We're in negotiations, there have been talking to men about putting word for today on a satellite radio communicator. And it can be beamed up to it and can be picked up all over the world. In fact, they're talking about little receiver sets that they can make to operate on solar energy.

So that for just a few dollars, they can make these little receivers that will be tuned only to that particular satellite. And the natives anywhere in the world can set out the little radios and catching the energy of the sun can listen to the broadcast. And at night, all they have to do is take a lead wire and put it in the fire and enough energy will be generated between the cold part and the hot part of the wire to operate the little radio at night.

Amazing, the things that are being developed today. Tremendous means of getting the gospel into all the world. Now Jesus said, a brother will betray the brother to death.

The father, the son. The children shall rise up against their parents and shall cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated of all men for my name's sake.

But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. But when you shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, let him who reads understand. Then let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Now Jesus is pleading for understanding of this. In the book of Daniel chapter 9, he refers to the abomination of desolation. According to my understanding, in putting a composite together, using Revelation chapter 13, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and Daniel chapters 9 and 12.

As I see and understand the abomination of desolation, according to the scriptures, the Jews are going to rebuild their temple. It would seem that the treaties and arrangements for their rebuilding of the temple will be accomplished through a very powerful, wise, astute leader that is going to arise to lead the European community. And that he will make a covenant, Daniel chapter 9, with the nation of Israel.

But after three and a half years, he will break that covenant and he will set up the abomination which causes desolation. In the 12th chapter of the book of Daniel, it says he will cause the daily prayers and

oblations to cease. He'll stop the sacrifices that the Jews have reinstated.

According to Paul in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, he is going to come to the temple of God and show that he himself is God and demand to be worshipped as God. And he will show all kinds of miracles and signs and wonders. So that if possible, he will deceive even the elect.

According to the 13th chapter of the book of Revelation, he will cause an image to be made of himself and this image will be placed within the temple. And people will be required to worship this image. And he has power to put to death those that would refuse to worship the image.

So, Jesus said, let him who reads understand. When you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not, that is the abomination which causes desolation, this is the thing that will cause the desolation or the destruction of the great tribulation period. The last three and a half years, the whole sequence of this wrath of God being poured out upon man will be triggered by this ultimate blasphemy.

As this man of sin, the son of perdition, stands in the holy of holies of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and there blasphemes the God of heaven and declares that he is God and demands to be worshipped as God. That is the final straw of man's rebellion against God and God will begin his move to judge the world in order that he might establish his new kingdom, the kingdom of righteousness and joy and peace. This will be the trigger that will usher in the three and a half years of the great tribulation period.

So, Jesus makes reference to it. When you see this abomination of desolation that is spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, let him that reads understand, then let them that are in Judea, notice he's speaking not of the United States, he's not speaking of the church, those that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains and let him that is on the housetop not go down into his house, neither enter to take anything out of his house. Let him that is in the field not even go back again to take up his garment, but woe to them that are with child and to those that are nursing in those days and pray that your flight will not be in the winter, for in those days there shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

This is the time of the greatest tribulation the world will ever know in its history, even worse than the flood of Noah's day, even worse than the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Never has the world seen anything to equal what is going to transpire during this three and a half year period. Today with the strong anti-nuclear movement, all kinds of horrible scenarios are being imagined.

The problem is, these scenarios are all possible with the weapons that we have today. Surely a worldwide war with the use of nuclear weapons could bring to pass the whole scenario as is pointed out for us in the book of Revelation, this tremendous devastation. However, this destruction and tribulation that is coming will not necessarily result from man's devices, but is coming as a direct judgment of God upon the earth.

And God will be involved in the judgment that is going to fall. Now those Jews that are in Jerusalem at the time of this abomination of desolation are warned by Jesus to flee to the mountains and also in another gospel flee to the wilderness. In the book of Revelation chapter 12, John talks about the woman, the nation Israel.

And he said, and she was given wings of an eagle to bear her to the wilderness to a place that has been prepared for her where she will be nourished for three and a half years. So during the time of the great tribulation, those Jews that heed the warning of Jesus in Judea will flee to the wilderness area that God

has prepared for them where God will provide and take care of them for that three and a half year period of the great tribulation. In Isaiah the 16th chapter, God speaks unto Moab or modern day Jordan, open up your gates and receive my people, bear them safely to Petra where they might be sheltered until the great tribulation period is over.

And so again, putting a composite together using the prophecies of Isaiah out of the Old Testament, the prophecies of the New Testament, the book of Revelation, here in the Gospels, it would appear that when this abomination of desolation takes place, the Jews who up until that point, many of them have acclaimed this man who helped them rebuild their temple. They've acclaimed him as the Messiah. Suddenly their eyes will be open and the deception will be over and they will realize this fellow deceived us.

And hopefully they will turn to the Scriptures and they will obey the warning of Jesus and they will flee to the rock city of Petra. Now according to the book of Revelation, the Antichrist will send out an army after them, but the earth will open up and swallow the army that he sends after them. And God said that He will keep them safe there in Petra until this indignation or the great tribulation period is over.

And Jesus said to them, pray that your flight will not be in winter. In Matthew's Gospel He adds, nor on the Sabbath day. And it will be difficult for those women who are pregnant or those who are nursing.

Woe unto them. Why? Because they're going to have to flee. It's going to be hard.

It's going to be a real hardship. And to have small children with you will actually restrict your flight. And it will be difficult.

So it's just a woe to those because of the difficulties that they are going to experience during this period. For in those days shall be affliction such as never been in the history of man. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved.

But for the elect's sake, Israel, those whom He has chosen, He will shorten the days. The Lord speaks here of a period in man's history when unless the Lord would shorten the days, man would have the capacity of destroying himself. No flesh would remain.

But God, for the elect's sake, those whom He has chosen, will shorten those days. And then if any man shall say to you, lo, here is Christ, or lo, He is there, believe him not. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

So, signs and wonders are not always from God. Many times they can be to seduce a person after a false prophet. But take heed, He said, behold, I have foretold you all things.

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light. Here he is referring to that same day that Joel prophesied. In chapter 3, Peter quotes in Acts chapter 2. And we read about it in the book of Revelation under the sixth seal.

The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light. The stars of heaven shall fall, a meteorite shower, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

Oh, glorious day. After the tremendous holocaust, when the world is almost destroyed, the glorious return of Jesus Christ coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And He shall send His angels and they

will gather together to elect the Jews, actually, from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of the heaven.

This, of course, is a reference to the prophecies there in Isaiah. Now, learn a parable of the fig tree. When her branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

So you, in like manner, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that it is near even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

In the Old Testament, in parables, the fig tree was a reference to the nation of Israel. In Jeremiah, the 23rd chapter, God likens the nation of Israel to a basket of rotten figs that are so rotten that they have no value only to be thrown away and destroyed. Chapter 24 of the book of Jeremiah.

And then over in Hosea, the 9th chapter and the 10th verse, God makes again a reference to the nation of Israel as a fig tree where the Lord declares, I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness. I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time. And then in Joel 1 and verse 7, God in crying out against the destruction that had taken place of the nation, He said, He hath laid My vine waste and barked My fig tree.

So Israel was likened unto a vine in the parables, but also likened unto a fig tree. So that when you see the branches yet tender and beginning to put forth leaves, you know that summer is near even know that My coming is near even at the doors. Many Bible scholars believe that this reference is to the rebirth of the nation of Israel.

And that that generation that saw the rebirth of the nation Israel would be the final generation. I think that there is great validity in that interpretation. Now Jesus declares how His Word is going to stand.

Heaven and earth will pass. The Bible tells how the heavens are going to be folded up and the earth is going to melt with a fervent heat. But My words, He said, shall not pass away.

The eternal Word of God. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man. No, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Jesus, as we said when He came to the earth, took upon Himself limitations. Deliberately took upon Himself limitations. He was God manifested in the flesh.

But by virtue of coming in a body of flesh, while He was in the body of flesh, He could not be omnipresent. He was restricted, as is a body of flesh, to locality. And there were other restrictions that He took while in a body.

And there was a restriction in actually the knowledge of the day that He would return. He said, I don't even know that. No man knows it.

Only the Father. Now that He is glorified again with the Father, He no doubt knows it. But while in the restrictions of the body, that was a part of the restriction while existing here on the earth in a body.

It is sheer folly and presumption for any man to pretend that he has some divine revelation or some insight into the Scripture where he knows the day and the hour that the Lord is coming. Even though the Lord is so specific in this area, there are always those speculators who seem to be able to gather some kind of a following after them because they've set out on some system of interpreting of the Scriptures whereby

they feel that they have interpreted the very day for the return of Jesus Christ. Back in 1843 or so, Reverend Miller, by using the book of Daniel and taking the 2,550 days and making it 2,550 years instead of days, though the Scripture said days, somehow he translated the days to years and he came up with the year of 1843.

That's when the abomination took place and so until that time, 2,550 years instead of days, there will be the cleansing. Well, he didn't bother to look at his history book and find out that exactly 2,550 days was when Judas Maccabeus actually cleansed the temple and that prophecy was literally fulfilled to a day and there is no merit or basis of making a day-year concept there, or yet he did. And so he had his faithful put on white robes and back in Zion, Illinois, they went out and they sat on the hillside waiting for Jesus to return.

They were certain of it. And, of course, in recent times, there are men who like to get their names in newspapers who have predicted the date of the coming of Christ and gotten the people all excited. A few years ago, people were giving me tapes by some fellow that had predicted April the 1st of 1978, I think it was, for the coming of Christ.

And then last year, that fellow down in Tucson who had it all doped out to June the 30th, you know, last year. And yet, Jesus said, no man knows the day or the hour. So, what are we supposed to do? He said, just take heed.

Watch and pray. Because you don't know when the time is. Because the Lord can be coming for us at any time, the best advice is just watch and pray.

Be ready. Take heed. Be ready.

You don't know when it's going to happen. For the Son of Man is as a man who is taking a far journey, who left his house and gave authority to his servants. And to every man is a portion of work.

And he commanded the porter to watch. Therefore, he said, you watch. For you know not when the master of the house is coming at even or midnight or when the cock is crowing in the morning.

Watch, lest he come suddenly and he find you sleeping. And what shall I say unto you? And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch. So, what Jesus is saying to you is watch.

Be ready. You don't know exactly when he is coming. He may come at evening, he may come at midnight, he may come in the early morning.

Because you don't know, just be watching and be ready.

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