



# Mark 13

An OCF Bible Study

## Mark 13

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**What was the disciples' attitude toward the temple (vv. 1-4)?** Awe. The disciples seem like tourists.

The Jewish people were justifiably proud of this great building. It was one of the magnificent structures of the ancient world. It was the center of Jewish life for almost a thousand years. For many Jews of that day, the temple had become an idol. It subtly got to the point where it began to mean more to the people than God Himself. Then Jesus rocks their world: *Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.*

**What was Jesus prophesying (v. 2)?** The destruction of the temple. **When was it destroyed?** 70 A.D., by the Romans. Seven years after the expansion was completed. The original temple was built by Solomon and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar during the Babylonian captivity. It was rebuilt by Zerubbabel during the time of Ezra. The temple was greatly expanded by Herod the Great. Herod's rebuilding started in 19 B.C. and was not completed until 63 A.D., taking more than eighty years.

**On the heels of Jesus' stark comment about the temple, The disciples ask Jesus two crucial questions (v. 4): When will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?** Jesus doesn't answer their questions directly. He largely ignores the "when" question. He does answer the "what" question by pointing to signs that will be related to the end times.

NOTE: Recognizing that the study of the end times (eschatology) is a controversial subject, the following discussion of the end times is from a pre-millennial/pre-Tribulation/rapture perspective.

Verses 5-27 talk about a period commonly referred to as the "end times," which some consider to be a seven-year period right before Christ returns in His Second Coming, also referred to as the Tribulation/Great Tribulation. Mark's comments are not designed to present a complete picture of the end times.

**What are some of the conditions that will precede Christ's Second Coming (vv. 5-8)?** False Messiahs, wars, rumors of war, earthquakes, and famines. *And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet (v.7).*

**Jesus compared false Messiahs, wars, rumors of war, earthquakes, and famines to the beginning of what (v. 8)?** Labor pains. Signs to remind us that the baby is coming, but the baby is not here yet. We are still in the labor pain phase. The baby is yet to come.

**What things did Jesus tell His disciples they would endure for His sake (vv. 9-11)?** Persecution, betrayal, rejection. Jesus tells His disciples to be prepared for the persecution that will come against them after He returns to heaven. They will suffer because of their allegiance to Him. This will not be a feel-good time for the disciples. **How does Jesus tell them to handle the persecution (v. 11)?** Jesus tells His followers to not worry about what to say when they are "put on the spot" for being a follower of Jesus. At that moment, the Holy Spirit will give them words to say. This is a promise for martyrs, not ministers.

**What one thing must be accomplished prior to Christ's Second Coming (v. 10)?** "All" the nations must hear the gospel before the end of the age (Matthew 24:14).<sup>1</sup>

**What is the source of this family conflict/hatred (vv. 12-13)?** Jesus. **What does Jesus exhort us to do?** He who stands firm to the end shall be saved. The ancient Greek word *hupomeno* for "stand firm" literally means to "remain under", i.e. trusting in the sovereign hand of God. When trials and persecution are swirling about, we can't be so desperate for an escape that we will compromise. **What are some ways we can stand firm?**

**Who is the abomination that causes desolation (vv. 14-23)?** The Antichrist. He will gain political power and spiritual authority over every nation on the earth. He will most likely begin his rise to power as a very influential, very charismatic, political or religious diplomat. He will be seen as an economic genius, a foreign policy genius, a supreme world ruler. The Antichrist will make a covenant with the Jewish people. The Temple will be rebuilt; worship and sacrifice will be reestablished. After three and a-half years the Antichrist will break his covenant, stop

the temple sacrifices, desecrate the temple and proclaim himself to be God. Remember, at this time, the Church (the body of true believers) has been raptured.

**What should be done when the abomination that causes desolation (the Antichrist) appears (vv. 14-16)?** Flee and hide. This applies especially to those who have become believers since the start of the Tribulation. The abomination that causes desolation is his full title in Daniel 9, 11, and 12, and Matthew 24.

**How does Mark describe the conditions during the end times (v. 19-23)?** It will be a time of chaos, calamity, bloodshed, slaughter. If the terrors of the end times were to continue indefinitely, mankind could not survive. So for the sake of God's elect, the days will be limited (to seven total years). No one should be deceived about the nature of Jesus' Second Coming. It will not be secret or private, and it won't be a "different" Jesus. In the midst of such Tribulation, men will be tempted to fall for false messiahs. **In contrast to the appearance of false messiahs, the true Messiah will appear after the predicted Tribulation (vv. 24-25)** This is, of course, a reference to the Second Coming, not the Rapture.<sup>2</sup>

**What will the Second Coming look like (vv. 26-27)?** Jesus will come in the clouds with great power and glory. He will send His angels and gather together His elect. He will come *with* His angels to gather those who have come to Jesus during the end times and have survived. This will be no baby Jesus, but a conqueror, coming in glory and splendor, to judge not to save.

**What is the meaning of the parable of the fig tree (vv. 28-31)?** The fig tree has a regular pattern: the leaves appear, then summer follows. When you see the leaves, you know summer is near. In the same way, when these signs—particularly the abomination of desolation—appear, the world can know that the return of Jesus is near.

***Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place (v. 30). What generation is Jesus referring to?*** It cannot be the generation of the disciples, because they did not see the triumphant return of Jesus. It is undoubtedly the generation that sees these signs—especially the abomination of desolation. It is also possible that the word generation can be understood as a *race* or *people*. This may be a promise that the Jewish race will not perish before history comes to a conclusion.

**What is the common thread/continuing emphasis for the disciples relative to the Second Coming and events leading up to it (vv. 32-37)? What are they to do?** Watch, be alert, be on guard. Live in a state of awareness so they are not deceived by false messiahs and people spreading untruth.

**What are some of the obstacles for us in living with a mindset that Jesus is coming back?** It's so easy to get caught up in the cares of the world and the busyness of life that we forget Jesus is coming back. Complacency—He said He's coming back. We've been waiting 2000 years.

**What is the message of the parable of the doorkeeper (vv. 33-37)?** A doorkeeper or porter was responsible to guard the entrance to his master's house. Entrusted with his master's goods, this doorkeeper did "not know when" his master would return. However, whenever the master returned, the doorkeeper would have to be ready to admit him to a well-managed house.<sup>3</sup> The message is—be ready for the return of the Master! Sleeping = spiritually negligent.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Mark, 2014 Edition* (published by Sonic Light, [www.soniclight.com](http://www.soniclight.com)), pp. 170

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 173

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 176