

History of the Future
Part One: Before Tribulation
Mark 13:1-13

Introduction

We now come to the part of the gospel where Jesus tells His disciples about the end times. This is the Olivet discourse. He is sitting on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and explains to the disciples privately about the end times. He is telling them about the future. The predictions would come as a shock to the disciples because they are still anticipating the kingdom that the Messiah would establish. They believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, so they are anticipating that Jesus would take over Israel and usher in peace and prosperity for the nation for all eternity. They are essentially asking Jesus in this passage, "When is the Kingdom coming?" They even ask this question after Jesus' resurrection, just before He ascended to heaven.

Acts 1:6 *Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"*

Why are they so blind to what Jesus means and why are they still asking about the Kingdom? To be fair to them, when the prophecies talk about the eternal reign of the Messiah, they are talking about His Second Coming. There are no distinctions between His First coming and His Second coming. The reason being is that the church age is a mystery that was hidden from the Jews. The glorious church that Christ built Himself and on Himself is the body that composes of both the Jews and Gentiles and all kinds of people that are equal heirs of grace. This is a concept that the Jews did not know, nor understand.

Here Jesus gives them a message of what is going to happen. He gives them a history lesson of the future. He tells them to watch out, to be prepared. He says this that He does not want His people to be caught off-guard. He gives them (and us) warnings, promises, comfort, and hope. He tells the disciples that the temple is going to be destroyed in **verses 1 through 2**. **Verses 3 through 13**, Jesus tells them about what is going to happen from this point on to the Tribulation. From **verses 14 through 24**, Jesus talks about what happens during the Tribulation, and, from **25** on, He talks about His Second Coming.

Footnote: There are many different interpretations of the end times that are held by Christians. The reason for the variety of interpretation is that it is difficult to analyze what Jesus means when the future hasn't happened yet. Because there are different interpretations, there are much confusion as to what is correct and what is not correct. Just to clarify, there are some common threads between all interpretations.

- All believe in the Second Coming of Jesus
- All believe that Jesus is coming as a King to rule over all creation
- Belief in the Second Coming is one of the non-negotiable doctrines

Luke 21:27 *Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

Acts 1:11 *who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

1 Timothy 6:14 *that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing,*

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

- Disagreements are what happens before and after His Second Coming
 - AD 70, when the Temple is destroyed (Preterism)
 - Millennium—Is there one, and when does it happen? (Dispensationalism, Premillennialism, Amillennialism, Postmillennialism)
 - Interpreting principles of Revelation, Daniel, Ezekiel, etc (historicist, idealist, futurist)

I am mostly dispensational premillennialist. I hold to the futurist interpretation of Revelation, Daniel, etc. I believe all what Jesus and John say are about the future that has not happened yet. I believe that the Great Tribulation will occur for 7 years and then Jesus will return. I believe that the church will go through the Tribulation, and then the Rapture will occur before His Second Coming before the pouring of the seven bowls of God's wrath. I will teach what I believe and comment on other viewpoints.

I. The Destruction of the Temple (1-2)

1 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" 2 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

- (Picture of Temple)
 - Massive place—whole temple complex covers 35 acres
 - Temple complex is about 16 to 20 stories tall (From floor of Kidron Valley to top of Temple)
 - Temple is overlaid with gold
 - Massive stonework
 - Began building by Herod the Great in 20/19 BC and completed AD 62
- Disciples
 - Awe of building
- Jesus' reaction
 - Holy anger
 - Temple will be destroyed—nothing left
- Temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70

II. The Signs of the Age (3-4)

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

- Private audience
- When is the divine Messianic Kingdom coming?
 - This is in regard to Jesus' comments about the destruction of the Temple
 - Disciples accept that the Jewish religion is apostate

Footnote: Before we get into what Jesus says about the future, there are two interpretative systems I would like to touch upon: preterism and postmillennialism.

- Preterism—interpretation that the majority of the prophecies that Jesus made at Mount of Olives and the Island of Patmos have been fulfilled in the first century AD. Jesus had ushered a new kingdom when the Temple was destroyed in AD 70. There are problems with this view: 1) Jesus had already cast His judgment on the Temple earlier. He is through with the Temple systems because it is not a place of true worship (and has not been for a while). 2) There are

events that Jesus says that have not yet been fulfilled and cannot be possibly been fulfilled at AD 70.

- Postmillennialism—interpretation that the church is going to overcome the world and the gospel is going to overpower the world's system and things are going to get better. When that happens, then Jesus comes back again to rule the world. The church would produce the Kingdom and give it to Christ. There are problems with this view: 1) Jesus Himself said that the end is going to get worse, not better. There will be a barrage of antichrists, false teachers, wars, persecution, and upheavals. It will build in intensity until the time of the Great Upheaval that such the world has never experienced when the Anti-Christ comes into power. 2) Jesus establishes the Kingdom Himself, not the church.

III. Beware of False Teachers (5-6)

5 And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 6 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many.

- Beware—watch out
 - Same warning as in **12:38**
- False teachers and prophets
 - People giving false predictions about the future (Nostradamus)
 - People claiming to be Christ (Jim Jones, David Koresh)
 - People will follow them, even to death

IV. Natural and Social Upheavals (7-8)

7 But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.

- Wars and rumors of wars
 - Do not be alarmed—normal course of history
- Earthquakes
- Famine
- Diseases
 - Black Death—Bubonic plague Europe (75 to 200 million people killed)
 - Great Flu of 1918—between 20 to 40 million people killed
- Beginning of sorrows
 - Sorrows—birth pangs
 - Woman in contraction
 - It starts off mild, then building up both in frequency and severity
 - Intensifies at moment of birth
 - Jesus is saying that it is going to get worse

V. Persecution of the Church (9-13)

9 But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

- Jewish persecution
 - Before councils and synagogues
 - Beaten—39 lashes
- Gentile persecution
 - Before kings
- Familial persecution
 - Families betray their own
- You will experience persecution

II Timothy 3:12 *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*
- Why?
 - They hate Christ

1 John 3:13 *Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.*

John 15:18 *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.*

- Testimony of believers
 - Gospel must be proclaimed to all people in all nations in every language
 - Effort to do this is underway right now
 - Jesus will come back when the full number of Gentiles are saved

Romans 11:25 *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

- God will be with us when we are confronted with persecution
 - Holy Spirit will take over and speak through us
 - Awesome truth because we are powerless and weak
 - His grace abounds to us!

Note: In spite of the world's hatred, the gospel is being preached to the ends of the earth. In spite of the devil's schemes to stop it, the Kingdom is growing. His Kingdom started with twelve men and it will soon be a countless number before the Lamb, singing His praises forever (**Revelation 7:9-12**).

- Those who endure to the end will be saved
 - Taken to glory
 - Endure?
 - We will not earn our salvation by enduring
 - We demonstrate our salvation by enduring
 - False Christians will not endure

1 Peter 1:3-7 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **5** who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, **7** that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

- Testing of your faith produces endurance

Conclusion

Our Lord Jesus gives us a warning of what to expect today and tomorrow. He promises that these things will happen, yet He gives us comfort in knowing that He will never abandon us. We have the glorious hope in the future when we will see Him face-to-face and the things of this world will grow dim in the light of His glory and grace.