

The Gospel of *Mark*

The Servant Leadership of Jesus

The Servant's Ministry in Jerusalem (continued) (11 – 16)

This is one of the most difficult chapters in the Bible to interpret ^{Matthew 24-25, Luke 21}. Jesus gave His prophetic message to His disciples, but there is controversy whether it generally applies to the rapture (at the beginning of the Tribulation) and/or to the Second Coming (at the end).

Private Teaching and Ministry: *The Signs of the End Times* (13:1-31)

1-4 As they left the temple, the Jesus' disciples remarked about the impressiveness of the buildings. However, Jesus commented that the (massive) "stones" of the "great buildings" would all be "thrown down" ^{Luke 19:44}. Jesus headed east, and on the Mount of Olives He sat down facing the temple. At that time, His "inner circle" ^{Mark 5:37, 9:2, 14:33} plus Andrew asked Jesus when/how it would happen. The temple was started by Herod the Great, but still under construction 46 years later ^{John 2:20}. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in 70 A.D. by Roman troops led by Titus Vespasian. They took apart the temple stone-by-stone to recover the gold that melted when the temple caught on fire – a physical fulfillment of the spiritual decree Jesus made earlier ^{Matthew 23:38}, because of the defilement by the Jewish leaders who allowed money changers there ^{Mark 11:15}. The Shekinah glory departed from the temple about 600 years earlier ^{Ezekiel 11:22-25} to the Mount of Olives, and Jesus will return (Second Coming) there for His Millennial reign ^{Zechariah 14:4}. Their questions revealed that the disciples were assuming Jesus was referring to the ushering in of His Kingdom in the immediate future (a common belief in Jerusalem ^{Luke 19:11}).

5-8 Jesus warned them about the possibility of being deceived, especially by false prophets/messiahs. Wars, famines ^{Revelation 6:5-8} and earthquakes ^{Revelation 6:12, 16:18-19} will happen before the end comes. Deception is the handiwork (and one of the main tools) of the devil ^{John 8:43-44, Revelation 20:3,8}. There were OT warnings about false prophets ^{Isaiah 44:24-26, Jeremiah 14:14-16, Ezekiel 13:1-9}, as well as in the NT by Jesus ^{Matthew 7:15-20, 24:24}, Paul ^{Acts 20:28-31}, Peter ^{2 Peter 2:1-3} and John ^{1 John 4:1-3}.

Jesus' analogy of birth pains to wars ^{Matthew 24:8} implied intensification when coming to the end.

9-13 Jesus began by explaining that Christian persecution by the Jewish "local councils" and the synagogues ^{Matthew 10:17} (churches), was/is inevitable, and this treatment would result from an association with Him ^{John 15:21}. However, Jesus also assured the four that the Holy Spirit would guide the speech of anyone experiencing trials for His name ^{Luke 12:11-12}. He added that betrayers would not only be strangers, but often close family members ^{Micah 7:6 10:22, Luke 12:51-53}; however, those who are willing to persevere will be richly rewarded ^{Matthew 5:10-12, James 1:12, Revelation 2:10}.

The local "councils" were smaller versions of the Sanhedrin which tried charges of heresy and 'ordinary' law violations. The reference to Christians being "flogged" referred to a person being stripped bare to the waist and given 39 lashes ^{Deuteronomy 25:1-3, 2 Corinthians 11:24} (typically they would receive thirteen lashes to their chest and twenty six lashes to their back).

Gospel preaching to all nations will be finished post-, not pre-rapture. ^{Matthew 24:14, Revelation 14:6}

Among the many names of religious leaders (Confucius, Buddha, etc), Jesus Christ is the only name that creates hatred/tension, because His name has inherent power ^{Jeremiah 10:6, John 17:11}.

A works-based system is not implied by "he who stands firm to the end will be saved".

Standing firm ^{Ephesians 6:13-14} is simply the fruit of a true faith and trust in Jesus ^{Hebrews 3:14, 10:36}.

14-23 Jesus told them that the "abomination that causes desolation" will begin the "days of distress", also called the Great Tribulation ^{Revelation 7:14}. He described the circumstances as the worst times in (past or future) world history ^{Daniel 12:1, Joel 2:2} (especially for "pregnant or nursing" women ^{Luke 23:29}). In fact they will be so bad that "those in Judea" must not take time to gather any belongings, but immediately flee to the mountains, and without the Lord limiting time, all people would die. Jesus also warned them to "be on guard", because many people will say "Look here is the Christ" ^{Luke 17:23}, referring to many false Christs/prophets who will perform deceptive signs/miracles ^{2 Thessalonians 2:9-10}.

Abomination is a word for extreme idolatry. The "abomination of desolation" refers in the past to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. Epiphanes sacrificed a sow on the temple altar and set up an image of Zeus in the Holy of Holies in c.167 B.C. The Antichrist
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will do similar acts of desecration in the middle of the Tribulation ^{Daniel 9:27, 12:11, Revelation 11:2}

For example, he will set up an image of himself in the temple ^{2 Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 13:14}

Those with the spirit of the antichrist ^{1 John 4:3} (especially the Antichrist himself ^{1 John 2:18}) will have great ability to deceive people in the Tribulation, but not genuine believers (the “elect”).

24-27 He then quoted prophetic statements by Isaiah ^{Isaiah 13:10, 34:4} about natural phenomena that will be observed at the time Jesus will return in glory to gather His elect from the 4 winds ^{Zechariah 2:6}

This description of the coming of Jesus may refer to the rapture ^{1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation 4:1} or it may refer to the Second Coming ^{2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, Revelation 19:11-16} or it may refer to both.

28-31 Using the spring growth of a fig tree as an example of a familiar sign, Jesus warned about watching for signs, and then stated the generation would not pass away until the end times happen. He said there would be an end to heaven/earth ^{Revelation 21:1}, but His word would never end ^{Isaiah 40:8}

The fig tree was a frequent OT symbol for Israel ^{Jeremiah 8:13, Hosea 9:10}, giving this passage a Jewish emphasis. The word translated “generation” can also mean ‘race’, making this a confirmation God is not done with the Jews and will restore them, as promised ^{Daniel 9:24-27}

Private Teaching and Ministry: *The Day and the Hour are Unknown* (13:32-37)

32-33 Jesus told His inner circle (and His apostles, the world and to us) to “Be alert!” ^{1 Thessalonians 5:6}, because only God the Father knows the exact day when He will return (speaking of the rapture of the church ^{John 14:1-3, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18}), which will mark the start of the Last Days.

A clear statement: predictions of specific dates for End Times events are always wrong ^{Acts 1:7}

34-37 Jesus used a parable to teach them to “Watch!” ^{Luke 12:35-40} and not be sleeping (spiritually).

God used the analogy of Jewish wedding customs to indicate our (the bride) interactions with Jesus (the bridegroom). An aspect is when the bride expectantly waits for her bridegroom to come for her, whenever he has completed preparing the bridal chamber ^{Matthew 25:1-13, John 14:2-3}

Jesus used the common names for the four three hour watches throughout the night ^{Psalms 90:4}: evening: 6-9 pm, midnight: 9-midnight, when the rooster crows: 12-3 am, dawn: 3-6 am.