

“When Will These Things Be?”
Mark 13:1-8
(Preached at Trinity, June 25, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After a period of intense teaching in the Temple Jesus turns to leave, most likely never again to return. As He was departing His disciples came to Him boasting about the beauty and greatness of the Temple structure.
Mark 13:1 NAU - "As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"
 - a. It was built of white marble that was ornamented with gold. It was stunning to behold. Josephus described it as a snow covered mountain dazzling on every side.
 - b. In reality it was only a whitewashed tomb, beautiful on the outside but full of decay inwardly.
2. In **Matthew's** Gospel this passage follows immediately upon Jesus pronouncement of judgment upon Israel.
Matthew 23:37-38 NAU - "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸ "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!"
 - a. Jesus divulges to them that the entire system of Judaism was about to come crashing down. He says this very generation was about to experience the judgment of God upon the house of Israel.
Matthew 23:36 NAU – “Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”
 - b. The Temple structure was going to be utterly destroyed. Every stone would be moved from its place.
In the 70 AD destruction the Temple was inadvertently set on fire, but then the stones were taken apart as the soldiers tried to recover the melted gold. The prophecy of Jesus was carried out in detail.
3. The Disciples were actually asking two questions:
 - A. “Tell us, when will these things be?” Referring to the destruction of the Temple.
 - B. The other question is recorded in Matthew
Matthew 24:3 NAU - "what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"
Mark 13:4 NAU - "Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"
 - C. In the minds of the disciples they were actually only asking a single question. They could not imagine the world continuing without the Temple. If the Temple was destroyed it must surely mean the end of the age. So their question was really one single question. In Jesus' answer, however, He addresses both the destruction of Jerusalem *and* His second coming as two distinctly different events.

4. As I pointed out last time, in contrast to the various extreme positions, the position taught by the late John Murray seems to be the most balanced.
In His answer to the disciples Jesus is dealing with two questions – the destruction of Jerusalem and the entire period leading to the second Advent of Christ. In other words He is speaking of what is called the interadvental period – the period between the first and second advents of Christ.
 5. To the first part of their question, “when shall these things be” Jesus gives instruction about the immediate – the conditions leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. But regarding the second advent He gives no answer for it is not for us to know the times.
Acts 1:7 – “And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.”
Matthew 24:36 NAU - "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."
Mark 13:32-33 NAU - "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone*.³³ "Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the *appointed* time will come."
 6. In the Olivet Discourse Jesus answers both of the question of His disciples—things near at hand—the destruction of Jerusalem, and things as they will continue to be. Jesus is answering the question of His disciples by disclosing to them a synopsis of history from the time of His death until He returns in glory.
 7. Tonight I want us to look at **Verses 6-13**
What we see here is the very so-called signs that so many today hold forth as evidence for the nearness of the return of Christ are not signs at all.
Jesus begins with a warning in **Verse 5** - "See to it that no one misleads you."
Verse 7 - " but *that is not yet the end*."
 8. The point is this. To their question, “When shall these things be” Jesus is basically saying, “There will be no sign.”
The ultimate sign will be you look up and see Him – that’s the sign.
Matthew 24:30 NAS - "and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory."
- I. False teachers and false Christs
- Mark 13:6 NAU** - "Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He!*' and will mislead many."
Mark 13:21-22 NAU - "And then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, *He is there!*'; do not believe *him*; ²² for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect."
- A. This was true in the first century and true today
 - 1 John 2:18 NAU** - "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour."
 - 1 John 2:22 NAU** - "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son."
 - 2 John 1:7 NAU** - "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist."

- B. People would much rather receive a lie
2 Timothy 4:3 NAU - "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,"
1. These things will only increase in intensity
Mark 13:8 NAU - "These things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs."
 2. People flock to man-centered ministries today to hear a perverted Gospel. The pastor of one of the largest churches in the U.S. preaches, "You may make some mistakes-but that doesn't make you a sinner. You've got the very nature of God on the inside of you."
 3. In the period prior to the return of Christ there will occur a great falling away—a great period of apostasy
2 Thessalonians 2:2-3 KJV - "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition"
2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 KJV - "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

II. Great strife among the nations

Mark 13:7-8 NAU - "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; *those things* must take place; but *that is* not yet the end. ⁸ "For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"

- A. I often hear people say, "Wars and rumors of wars. Signs of the end."
1. Jesus is saying that these things will continue but they are NOT signs of the end.
Mark 13:7 NAU - "*those things* must take place; but *that is* not yet the end."
 2. The period prior to the destruction of Jerusalem was a period of turmoil
 - a. Jesus was born during the Pax Romani – a time of peace in the Roman Empire.
 As the time of 70 A.D. neared political turmoil upset the empire from one end to the other. At one point there were 4 different emperors in one year.
 - b. For the Jewish nation, from the time they rejected Christ and their house left desolate they knew only strife until the final great collapse.
 3. In spite of the constant threat of attack Jesus tells His disciples,
Mark 13:7 NAU - "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened"

- B. Wars would continue from the crucifixion until 70 AD and until the end of the age. *"that is not yet the end."*
1. Wars and strife are to be expected until the end of time – as long as lost men rule upon the earth there will be wars and strife.
 2. Will Durant wrote: “War is one of the constants of history, and has not diminished with civilization and democracy. In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war.”

II. Other judgments: Famines, Pestilences, and Earthquakes

- A. This fallen world will always be in a state of convulsing turmoil
1. Earthquakes
There were many earthquakes during this period. Vesuvius erupted in 79 destroying Pompeii. But earthquakes have not been limited this period. Aristotle, Strabo, Seneca, Livy, and Pliny each describe seismic phenomena in their day. There were over 700 recorded during the 19th Century. We read of earthquakes and loss of life continually today
 2. Famine
The famine while Jerusalem was under siege was horrible but Jesus speaks of famines in the plural
 3. Natural disasters are also a part of this fallen world. There will always be floods, famine, earthquakes, tornados & hurricanes.
Jesus says, *"that is not yet the end."*
"these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs."
 4. In other words they will increase in frequency and intensity until Christ returns and all things are made new. Paul says all of creation is suffering as if in the labor of childbirth
Romans 8:22 NAU - " For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now."
- B. While all these things are to be present throughout history, they were more intense and concurrent prior to the fall of Jerusalem and will be before the return of Christ.
1. It is amazing, however, how many church members are enticed by those men that insist our current events prove the end is near.
 - a. For 40 years Hal Lindsay has held up the newspaper and declared that Jesus is about to return at any moment.
 - b. I have a book in my office titled, *"101 Reasons Why Christ Returns by 1988."*
In the introduction the author writes, "I have simply coordinated today's news with the words of the prophets."
 2. Jesus says concerning these things, *"that is not yet the end."*
 3. Too often today well meaning Christians are caught up in the frenzy of Dispensationalism and read that these things are signs of the end. Everything becomes a sign.
Kent Hughes writes: "Sometimes it becomes absurd, like the man who told me that the return of the Lord must be imminent because our national debt is out of hand. This is narcissistic self-centered, money-clip eschatology."

Conclusion:

1. Jesus clearly tells us the answer to the question, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?"
2. There were signs of the destruction of Jerusalem
 - a. The abomination of desolation
Mark 13:14 NAU - "But when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."
 - b. Rome marching upon Jerusalem
Luke 21:20-21 NAS - "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. ²¹ "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains"
3. But of the end of the age He tells us that there will be no outward sign.
Mark 13:7 NAU - "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; *those things* must take place; but that is not yet the end."
4. There will be but one ultimate sign. Jesus gives us the sign in Matthew's Gospel:
Matthew 24:30 NAU - "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory."
5. The ultimate sign is when we see Him. But we do not know the time.
Mark 13:32 NAU - "But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone.*"
6. It isn't sensational. It doesn't make movies. It simply leaves us waiting and watching. And it leaves us pressing on in the Christian life for we know not the day nor the hour.