

13. Coming Events of Greatest Importance

When Will Be the Destruction of the Temple and the Coming of Christ?

Mark 13:1-2

13 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" 2 "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

With just cause, the disciples were impressed with the magnificent buildings of the temple. Jesus seized on the opportunity to prophesy about the destruction of the temple. Several models demonstrate how awe inspiring the edifice was.



Fotografía del Templo de Jerusalén en la maqueta del Jerusalén bíblico del jardín del Hotel Holyland en Jerusalén. Juan R. Cuadra. Wikipedia Public Domain

This view of the temple faces the Mount of Olives and Bethany where they were staying. Jesus prophecy would be fulfilled when Titus destroyed the temple in 70 AD. It is so provoking that the apostles brought it up after they had arrived back at the Mount of Olives.

Mark 13:3-4

3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"

The passage makes clear that they were talking about *things to happen*; and that they were seeking a sign prior to the fulfillment that *they are all about to be fulfilled*? It is important to separate the prophetic events from one another; otherwise the interpretation will be confusing.

Matt 24:3 clearly teaches that there are two main events each separate from the other in time and meaning:

3 As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

The antecedent of *this* is in Matt 24:2: "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." The first subject of prophecy is the destruction of the temple. The second subject of prophecy, different in time and meaning, is what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age. In order to justify their millennial theories, most people who seek an earthly reign of Christ obscure these two very different questions and their answers.

The *end of the age* is the end of the time when Christ returns and the time that he will say no one knows save the father in Mark 13: 32-33:

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

Peter describes this time as the time of the destruction of the heavens and earth in 2 Peter 3:10-13:

10 But **the day of the Lord** will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to **the day of God** and speed its coming. **That day** will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Peter also describes this time as the time when Jesus returns, ending all things earthly in 2 Thess 1:6-10:

6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power 10 **on the day** he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed.

The Destruction of the Temple and the Abomination that Cause Desolation

Mark 13:5-13

5 Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 8 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom

against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Every time there is a calamity or nature or war, men claim the end has come. Wars are often called the beginning of Armageddon (Rev 16:16). Jesus describes these events as the beginning of birth pains. If anyone comes claiming that they are the Lord, they surely are not. The passage describes the events that lead up to the destruction of the temple.

Mark 9:9-13

9 "You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12 "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

This passage describes the events affecting the church and the gospel also leading up to the destruction of the temple and beyond. Acts of the Apostles describes these events as they occur. The apostles are jailed and beaten; James is beheaded; Stephen is stoned. Paul describes how he suffered these things in the name of the Lord in 2 Cor 11:23-28:

3 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

The Abomination that Causes Desolation

Mark 13:14-23

14 "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong – let the reader understand – then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. 16 Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 17 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18 Pray that this will not take place in winter, 19 because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now – and never to be equaled again. 20 If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. 21 At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 22 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect – if that were possible. 23 So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

After the events of verses 5-13 transpire, they will see “the abomination that causes desolation.” They will see places the event in the lifetime of those listening. Matthew is adds

to this statement in Matt 24:15: "15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel." The abomination of desolation will be seen standing in the holy place, and this is the same event spoken of by Daniel. Dan 11:31 said: "31 His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation." An armed force will desecrate the temple and the daily sacrifice will end. What they are to look for constitutes the five variables that identify the event.

It will come in their life time.

They will see it'

It will fit Daniels prophecy.

An armed force will desecrate tht temple.

The daily sacrifice will end.

The only event to fulfill all these variables is the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70



Siege of Jerusalem (70) The destruction date according to the Hebrew calendar was the 9th of Av, also known as Tisha B'Av (29 or 30 July 70). Wikipedia Public Domain

In 66 CE the Jewish population rebelled against the Roman empire. Four years later, in 70 CE, Roman legions under Titus retook and subsequently destroyed much of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. The Arch of Titus, located in Rome and built to commemorate Titus's victory in Judea, depict a Roman victory procession with soldiers carrying spoils from the Temple, including the Menorah. Although Jews continued to inhabit the destroyed city, Jerusalem was razed by the Emperor Hadrian at the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE when he established a new city called Aelia Capitolina.

Josephus claimed that 1,100,000 people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish, and that 97,000 were captured and enslaved.

Josephus described the event:

The slaughter within was even more dreadful than the spectacle from without. Men and women, old and young, insurgents and priests, those who fought and those who entreated mercy, were hewn down in indiscriminate carnage. The number of the slain exceeded that of the slayers. The legionaries had to clamber over heaps of dead to carry on the work of extermination.

Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, because there remained none to be the objects of their fury (for they would not have spared any, had there remained any other work to be done), [Titus] Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as they were of the greatest eminence; that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne; and so much of the wall enclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared, in order to afford a camp for such as were to lie in garrison [in the Upper City], as were the towers [the three forts] also spared, in order to demonstrate to posterity what kind of city it was, and how well fortified, which the Roman valor had subdued; but for all the rest of the wall [surrounding Jerusalem], it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind. And truly, the very view itself was a melancholy thing; for those places which were adorned with trees and pleasant gardens, were now become desolate country every way, and its trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judaea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change. For the war had laid all signs of beauty quite waste. Nor had anyone who had known the place before, had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again. But though he [a foreigner] were at the city itself, yet would he have inquired for it.

Christ followed his description of the destruction with very specific instructions for the Christian disciples. Those who were in Judea were to flee to the mountains. Don't go back for belongings, but flee across the roof tops. If they were in the field don't go back. Such urgency of flight would be especially hard on pregnant women. The distress was so great as to be never equaled again. The Lord shortened the days for the elect's sake. They were not to believe anyone who claimed that this was the coming of the Lord. There would be false Christs and false prophets coming to deceive the elect. He had told them everything ahead of time. It has been said, I do not know the truth of it, that all the Christians fled the city ahead of the destruction.

Many false teachings mistaken take these facts and apply them to the second coming, even though Jesus repeatedly warned that this was not his coming. This was the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Caesar in 70 AD.

The Sign of the Lord's Coming and of the End of the Age?"

Mark 13:24-

24 *"But in those days, following that distress,*

"the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light;

*25 the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'*

26 "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

In those days describes the time from the destruction of the temple to the coming of the Lord. This use of the word *days* describes the end of the Mosaic Age and the entire duration of the Christian Age. Heb 1:1-2 reads:

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

We have seen how Paul and Peter described this end of days as a complete destruction of the heavens and earth right down to the elements. He will come in the clouds is consistently taught by the apostles. Paul wrote 1 Thess 4:15-18

15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.

Not only will we meet the Lord in the air to be with him forever, but we will be spiritual beings, according to 1 Cor 15:50-53

50 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

Mark 13:28-31

28 "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 29 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. 30 I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

This section turns back to the urgency of the preparing for the coming destruction of Jerusalem. These things have as the antecedent the above warning that related to that destructive event. The word of the Lord will never pass away; and in his words, there is no room for a millennial theory of any kind.

No One Knows

Mark 13:32-37

32 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going

away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

No one knows when the Lord will come, yet there are today many who pretend that they do know, only to be found false prophets every single time. The entire message for all generation of people is to watch! When Jesus said, “What I say to you, I say to everyone,” shows the singleness of the Lord’s teaching for every generation of mankind. We will all certainly know when that day is here for the Lord said in Matt 24:27:

For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.