**EYES ON JESUS – Mark 13 “The signs of the End Times”**

**Jesus takes the opportunity in his final days before the cross to speak about The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times:**

**Mark 13:1**As Jesus 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.”

**The Temple:**

* Built by King Solomon approx. 950BC (took 20 years), to replace the temporary **Tabernacle** (Tent) built by Moses and used through the time of David. There could be only one temple, the center for worship. The universal epicenter of the Hebrew faith.
* The temple was destroyed in 586 by the Babylonians when they sacked Jerusalem and took people of Judah into exile.
* It was rebuilt about 50 years later when the exiles returned, under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, but not to the level of its former glory.
* About 20BC King Herod refortified the Temple with a massive expansion and reconstruction even beyond the size and magnitude of the original structure. It seemed indestructible.
* This was the temple that Jesus visited and spoke about.

“Not one stone here will be left on another…” Jesus respond to the apostle observation of the massive stones the temple was built upon.

The layers of stone are marked and shaped differently showing the different times in which it was built.

*The “Western Wall Stone” is the largest stone in the Western Wall and is visible within the Western Wall Tunnel (45’L x 12’H x?D) estimates are that it weighs up to 600 tons. No one knows how it was quarried or moved. Even today it is 15x’s heavier than what could fit on a flatbed tractor-trailer.*

Jesus’s prophecy of the destruction of the temple took place in 70AD by the Romans, who completely toppled the temple, leaving no stone upon another. He is regarded, even by Orthodox Jews as having made a correct prophecy about this.

**The Olivet Discourse:**

Jesus takes this opportunity to pour out many specific and vague details about what will happen as the end times come about. He offers a caveat at the end of the discourse which basically tells them that although he knows WHAT will happen, He does not know WHEN it will happen.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”(v. 32).

It’s important that we understand this as we read the discourse, *God’s ways are not our ways, His timing is not our timing*.

**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?”

**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.*

He warns them not to be alarmed at the first sight of these signs. .

**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. **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**Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

**14**“When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’standing where itdoes not belong—*let the reader understand*—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. **15**Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. **16**Let no one in the field go back to get their 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 unequaled 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 Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. **22**For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

As we study Eschatology (the things having to do with the end times), it can be very confusing. Especially when some of the Olivet Discourse’s events seemed to have already happened with the Jewish-Roman wars which took place all over Israel, from the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus in 70AD, until the Bar Kokhba revolt 60 years later. Not only was Jerusalem destroyed, but the Jews were exterminated or driven out of Israel.

Other parts of the prophecy have not even come close to anything that has happened in history. That is why it’s so important to heed and respect Jesus’ words; “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

**23**So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

**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.

**Then Jesus returns:**

**26**“At that time people 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.

This is known as the Rapture, when Jesus returns.

**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**Truly I tell you, 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.

**“The Day and Hour Unknown”**

**32**“But about that *day or hour* no one knows, 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 their 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!’”

Jesus reiterates the statement multiple times, that we “*do not know”* the day or hour when all of this will take place.

It’s natural to wonder and even try to predict, many have done it in recent history, and *all have been wrong*.

Probably the most popular of these was Harold Camping, president of the Family Radio Network. He started out his ministry doing great things, bringing the gospel to over 150 communities in the US by establishing Christian radio stations all over America.

He fell prey to the temptation of trying to figure out the exact date of Jesus return, and spent the last few decades of his life making multiple false predictions about the day of Jesus return (Sept. 1994, Oct. 2005 and finally in May of 2011, with the final destruction of the world schedule to take place on Oct. 21st 2011, my birthday : )

His last prediction. Was accompanied by a massive publicity campaign which made the false prediction very public. He died 2 years later at age 92, and although he spent much of his life in wonderful Christian service and ministry, he will always be remembered most as the most ridiculed false prophet of modern times. (v. 22 – “if possible, even the elect will be deceived”).

Personally, If I was alive during the Roman conquest of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, if likely would have interpreted it as the very end of times and would have expected Jesus return imminently.

If I was a Bible teacher during WWII and the Holocaust, I most very likely would have been a doomsday teacher and likely would have seen everything going on in the world as an exact match to Apocalyptic Prophesies; The world was involved in the most colossal global war ever, the slaughter of 6 Million of God’s chosen people, Hitler – an obvious Anti-Christ, the nuclear bombs dropped on Japan.

I would have been compelled to look up scriptures that correlate with each of these things and would have taught that we are living in the very end of times, maybe even the Great Tribulation…

But I would have been wrong.

That’s why it’s so important, even as we see the day drawing nearer and nearer to be careful to not try to figure out *the day or the hour*, Jesus says we can’t know *the day or the hour*, but we CAN know “the season”.

That’s why He tells us to be *watchful*, *on guard* and *alert*…

Watchful – Watch what is going on in the world, and see how it relates to scriptures and signs of the end times.

* wars and rumors of wars,
* nation rising against nation,
* kingdom against kingdom,
* famines and earthquakes, etc.

On Guard - Matt 24:4 “Be careful that you are not deceived.”

In these times of information overload, much of the information that reaches us is false, and some is intentionally deceptive.

1 John 4:1 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Alert – That means do not be so preoccupied with the things of life, that you are oblivious to what is happening all around you. Life has a way of taking our attention off of Jesus and distracting us toward other things (That’s why it’s so important to ‘Keep Your Eyes on Jesus’).

Jesus himself gives us this advice;

Luke 21:34-36**34**“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. **35**For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. **36**Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

Jesus tells us to “pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen”. This shows us that our prayers can change our situations and even enable us to escape things that will happen in our world.

He also says to pray that we can stand before the Son of Man.

We should all live *each day* as if it may ‘*The Day’* that we stand before the Lord.

How? Stay prepared in your heart, and be committed to accomplishing all that He has for you in your life.

Some ask, if all the criteria for Jesus’ return has been accomplished or is in place.

The answer is, “now more than ever”.

There is one key element to end times prophecy that appears in Matthew. It is a final piece that needs to be put in place before the end can come. Up until recently, it seemed impossible that it could ever come about, but as of recently, it’s not only possible but *actual*.

Listen carefully to what Matthew includes as *key verse* in his account of the Olivet discourse;

Matt 24:**12**Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, **13**but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. **14***And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations*, and *then* the end will come.

“…*gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world…”*

There has never been a time in history before where this was even possible. Now as I said, It’s not only possible, it’s actual. It is actually already happening.

Because of the rapid advances in communication in Satellite, cellular, broadband and wireless access all over the world, along with advanced language translation technologies and missionary organizations (like C&MA) who are committed to reaching every people group;

“*the gospel of the kingdom is being preached all over the world”.*

We have never been able to say that before in History, like we can today.

We don’t know the day or the hour, but we *know the season*. The time is nearer now than ever before. This year has been a wake-up call for all of us to get it together and take seriously the call of God on our lives and the significance of the times we are living in. Let’s be watchful, alert on guard.

Let’s also be part of the last piece of the Olivet Prophecy and do our part to; “preach the gospel of the kingdom to the whole world as a testimony to all nations”, there are people only You can reach. Don’t miss your opportunity to share with what might be the last time they hear the good news of Jesus.

And pray…that the Lord will remain close to you in these times, protecting you from the evil in the world and guarding you from the deceiver who would like nothing more than to distract you and pull you away from the purposes of God in your life.

Let’s close with some words that Paul wrote during his “last Days”, the days leading up to his martyrdom in Rome.

**2 Timothy 1:11,12**

“I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to himuntil the day of his return.”

(PRAY)