

Discussing the End

Mark 13: 1-8

Following a time of intense debate within the Temple, Jesus and the disciples departed Jerusalem and made their way to the Mount of Olives. As they sat there on the mountain, having a clear view of the city below, Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse. The message Jesus shared with the disciples that day dealt with the end of the age, a time yet future. While He didn't describe every detail regarding the end times, Jesus shared enough to reveal the social and spiritual climate that will be present in that day.

As we begin to discuss the Olivet Discourse, also recorded in Matthew and Luke's gospels, I want to disclose that I do not have all the answers. There is no way anyone could say with absolute certainty that they understand what Jesus taught completely. Some of what Jesus shared with the disciples would be fulfilled in their lifetime, some of it they would see partially fulfilled, and some of these prophecies remain to be fulfilled. Although we cannot fully grasp everything Jesus taught, His words and warnings provide valuable insight to the end times. Through His teaching we understand the sovereignty of God in our future, and sense that we are rapidly approaching that day.

With all of this in mind, I want to begin our study of the Olivet Discourse. Today we will examine the [realities](#) within our text verses as we consider: [Discussing the End](#).

I. The Initial Conversation (1-4) – These verses speak of the moments that immediately followed Jesus' departure from the Temple. He and the disciples had been at the Temple for three consecutive days. As they left the Temple that day, one of the disciples commented on the beauty and enormity of the Temple in Jerusalem, [V.1](#). It was built of massive stones, all carefully laid one upon another. The Temple was a magnificent structure, the most beautiful building in Jerusalem, having been rebuilt by Herod. It was estimated to have been 172 feet long and twenty stories high. It would have been in view from any location within the city.

- Upon hearing the admiration of the disciple regarding the beauty of the Temple, Jesus declared that the time would come when not one stone would be left upon another, the Temple and the city of Jerusalem were destined for destruction, [V.2](#). This prophecy of Jesus would be fulfilled as Titus the Roman general invaded Jerusalem, as the Temple and much of the city was burned to the ground in 70 AD. As the Temple burned, the Romans realized the gold was melting and running between the cracks in the rocks. The Temple was destroyed as the gold was sought by the Romans, tearing each rock apart to harvest the melted gold.

- After hearing Jesus prophesy the coming destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to Jesus asking when these things would come to pass, [Vv.3-4](#). Sensing the burden of Jesus, they were curious about the timing of these events. They wanted to know which signs to look for that would reveal the fulfillment of the prophecies. Their question prompted Jesus' teaching on the end times, now known as the Olivet Discourse.

II. The Factual Revelation (5-8) – Jesus responded to the question posed by the brothers, sharing much regarding the end. His response will take us through the end of this chapter. As we begin to consider His revelation, we discover Jesus spoke of:

A. Deception (5-6) – *And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:* ^[6] *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.* During the tribulation the anti-Christ will come on the scene, deceiving and uniting the world, but Jesus warned of many false Christs and prophets leading up to and during that time. These will speak with passion and deceive many. [Mark 13:22](#) – *For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.* Even some of the saved by grace will be tempted to believe their message of deception.

- Following the resurrection of Christ, and after the death of the apostles, a man named Simon Bar Kokhba declared himself to be the Messiah around 132 AD. His claims garnered many followers leading to a Jewish uprising against Rome. This rebellion resulted in the complete destruction of Jerusalem in 135 AD. We have witnessed the rise and fall of many charismatic leaders throughout history. Hitler deceived the Germans leading up to, and during World War II. In modern times, men like Jim Jones and David Koresh claimed to be Messiah and gathered a following of believers. Dictators in certain countries have a god-like status before their people and are followed with unquestioned devotion. Such deception will continue to increase as we approach our Lord's return.

B. Divisions (7-8a) – *And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.* ^[8a] *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.* The Jews certainly knew the heartache and hardships of war. At this moment they suffered under Roman domination. Since the Northern Kingdom had been conquered by the Assyrians and the Southern Kingdom by the Babylonians, they had not known real peace. Sadly, this trend has continued since the days of Christ upon the earth. There have been few days of peace upon the earth. In my lifetime we have experienced war in Vietnam, Somalia, Iraq, and we have been at war with terrorists' regimes since 2001. Civil war has ravaged parts of Africa for decades. Syria has endured civil war and unrest for years. Ukraine is embattled in an ongoing war

with Russia for territory. China and India are in a standoff, threatening attacks. Today we face the threat of war with North Korea, Iran, Russia, and even China. Israel faces continual attack from the Palestinians and those sympathetic to their cause. ISIS continues to attack, terrorize, and brutalize anyone it deems a threat to their agenda or loyal to Israel or the Christian faith. These things must come to pass, and yet the end is not come. Clearly the stage is being set for the Lord's return!

C. Disasters (8b) – **and there shall be earthquakes in divers places.** Jesus also warned of earthquakes hitting in many areas throughout the world. The USGS estimates there are several million earthquakes each year. Many of these go undetected because they occur in remote areas without proper detection devices or they are very small on the Richter scale. We have all seen the devastation and destruction caused by earthquakes. It is estimated that 13 million people have died in earthquakes over the last 4,000 years.¹ The world has recorded earthquakes throughout history, but these are just another sign of the beginning of sorrows.

D. Despair (8b) – **and there shall be famines and troubles.** This is not something this generation has experienced in America, but the famines that result in mass starvation and death continue to plague our world. One would think with the advancements made in planting, production, harvesting, and transportation that this would be decreasing in our modern day, but the Bible is being fulfilled before our eyes. This will certainly increase during the Tribulation as the Lord unleashes the seals of judgment, but we are beginning to see its devastation today. According to the World Hunger Project, 795 million people – one out of nine in the world – do not have enough to eat. Almost half of the deaths in children under five are attributed to some form of malnutrition.

➤ Along with famines, Mark records Jesus warning of troubles to come. Matthew recorded Jesus speaking of famines and pestilences. The pestilences referred to disease and death. The troubles Mark revealed speaks of sedition, political turmoil, uproars, and disturbances. There has always been political and social unrest, but this seems to be increasing at an alarming rate. There can be no doubt that we are facing increasing troubles around the world. All of this points to the soon return of our Lord and the Great Tribulation revealed in Scripture.

➤ Having said all of that, Jesus revealed these were the beginnings of sorrows. Clearly, He warned these were not all the world would face. There would be much more to follow the beginning of sorrows. As we continue the Olivet Discourse, we will discover what else will accompany the beginning of sorrows. If these are just the beginning, we cannot imagine the horror and magnitude of the Tribulation in its entirety.

Conclusion: I will agree that these are difficult passages to consider. We lack the ability to fully comprehend all that will come upon the earth as the end draws near. The enemy will increase his attacks, making life difficult for the believer. Many will face intense persecution and even death for their faith. The opposition we face in America seems to increase with each passing day. We must prepare for the difficulties to come by abiding in the Word and in Christ our Lord. He is our only hope in this life and for the future. Are you in Christ today? Do you know Him as Lord and Savior? If not, I urge you to respond to Him today. None are promised tomorrow, and we have no way of knowing what a day will bring forth!

ⁱ The Sermon Notebook - The Sermon Notebook – Mark.