

The Signs of the Times Pt. 1 (God's Timing) *Mark 13:1-8*

Hebrews 11:1 Now **faith** (trust in what the Lord has said and promised) **is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.** NKJV

Hebrews 11:6 says, **without faith it is impossible to please God**, but that doesn't mean we don't use our brains; there is a lot of evidence to prove the Lord and the Bible apart from our faith.

The many fulfilled prophecies of scripture have to be the most amazing evidence that proves the Bible's divine origin, and they also prove that Jesus is who He said He is.

The world has always pointed to people like Nostradamus with his incredible fortune-telling abilities, even though his track record of accuracy is very dismal and esoteric at best.

But Bible prophecy has never been proven wrong. There are scriptures that call people by name, years before their birth.

We have also seen critics claiming Daniel never existed for years, until scholars discovered the early origin of him and his prophecies, proving scripture to be completely accurate again.

When it comes to Bible prophecy about the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, there are hundreds of prophecies that were proven once Jesus showed up in the New Testament time.

Please open your Bibles to *Mark 13* as we continue in a verse-by-verse study of the *Gospel of Mark*.

Last time in *Mark*, Jesus gave some warnings about the false pretense of the religious leaders as well as revealing His heart about gifts that are given with the right motivation.

Then Jesus spoke about the widow who gave a huge, meager offering and said, “*This poor widow has put in more than all those who have given.*”

Jesus values our giving; whether we are offering the Lord our time, talent, or treasures, He sees the heart and motivation.

Today is part one of a mini-series on *the signs of the times...*

Today’s passage happened right after that scene at the Temple and One of Jesus’ Disciples points out the beauty of the Temple, and then Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple.

I. The destruction of the Temple.

Read *Mark 13:1-2*

In *Matthew*’s account, before Jesus predicted the destruction of the Temple, He lamented about Jerusalem’s lack of repentance.

Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

Matthew 23:38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; NKJV

Jesus wanted to protect Jerusalem from this coming judgment, but He could not, because of Jerusalem’s rejection of Him.

Jesus was broken hearted over the fact that His chosen people, would not repent of their sin and accept Him for salvation.

Jesus has compassion over lost humanity which shows us an example of being broken hearted over the person who refuses His free gift as well.

Jesus wanted to gather His people and protect them; because sin and rebellion are destructive and the person who refuses Jesus will face the consequence of the destruction that comes from sin.

So, after Jesus lamented over Jerusalem, He left the Temple and His disciples pointed out the beauty and splendor of the Temple.

The original Temple was built by Solomon, but it was eventually **destroyed** by Babylon, as the Jewish people spent 70 years in captivity.

After the Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and Ezra and Zerubbabel rebuilt the actual Temple.

We are told the Jewish people mourned because the rebuilt Temple did not have the glory and beauty of the former Temple.

Later, Herod the Great ordered the Temple to be remodeled to far surpass its original glory under Solomon, but Herod died before the Temple remodel was fully completed in 64 A.D.

Here in our narrative, the Disciples felt the Temple was so great that it was evidence of God's blessing upon Jerusalem, so they pointed out the beauty and the splendor of the Temple to Jesus.

Jesus' statement about the destruction of the Temple was unthinkable to the Disciples because they believed the **Temple** was built so well, it could never be destroyed.

Some predictions can be pretty vague, but *Mark 13:2* was a pretty incredible prediction by Jesus, saying that one stone would not be left upon another on the Temple.

In the year 66 A.D. the Jews rebelled against Rome and in response, the emperor Nero dispatched an army to restore order.

By the year 68 A.D., Nero committed suicide and Ves-pa-sian was declared Emperor and returned to the Rome as his son, Titus, led the remaining army to attack Jerusalem.

During the siege in 70 A.D., Josephus estimates **1.1 million** Jews were killed and 90,000 others were enslaved.

By 70 A.D. Rome breached Jerusalem's walls and began ransacking the city and one soldier started a fire in the Temple.

Exodus 38:24 says there were 29 talents of gold in the Temple.

Some estimate a talent to be 70 pounds so there was approximately **2,030** pounds of gold in the original Temple.

The original temple was destroyed by Babylon, but Herod's Temple was supposed to be even grander than Solomon's.

When the fire in the Temple was started, the gold melted in-between the stones so, the Romans toppled every stone to retrieve the gold, fulfilling the prediction from 38 years earlier.

Since Jesus perfectly predicted the destruction of the Temple, it stands to reason that all other prophecies will happen exactly as He predicted as well.

God's delays should not be considered **proof** that He does not intend to fulfill His purposes or His prophecies.

2 Peter 3:8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Many have asked through the years why Jesus hasn't returned yet, Peter says remember, *one day is as a thousand years...*

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. NKJV

The Lord's timing is never early and never late; from the time of our birth until we draw our last breath, He is ordering our steps.

No event in time has ever gone against God's eternal plan, which He designed before the foundation of the world.

II. *When?*

Read ***Mark 13:3-4***

Since Jesus died on the cross, people have argued about the sequence of events of His return.

Many people confuse the second coming of Jesus with the rapture of the church; but they are two very different events within the biblical **timeline**.

Many people who do not know the difference between these two events often misinterpret scripture and because of their misunderstanding, they apply End Time events to the Church.

The Bible describes the rapture as the time when Jesus returns in the clouds and removes His Church from the earth, *i.e.*, those who died in faith as born-again believers, who are still alive.

Paul said in *1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed —*

1 Corinthians 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. NKJV

Once the Church is removed from earth, the seven-year Tribulation period of God's wrath, begins here on earth.

The Tribulation period culminates with the second coming of Christ, when Jesus returns to defeat the Anti-Christ, destroys evil, and establishes His **Millennial** kingdom.

Here the Disciples come to Jesus after the prediction of the Temple. Think about the Disciples expectation at this time...

During the Triumphant Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the Disciples still didn't fully understand what was happening.

The Disciples thought Jesus should have ridden in on a stallion because they were ready to make Jesus their physical king and challenge the Roman rule.

The Disciples didn't understand Jesus did not come as a physical king against Rome; instead, He came as the **King of Peace!**

So, Jesus described the destruction of the Temple and they asked...*When will these things be? What will be the sign of Your coming? What will be the sign of the end of the age?*

Mark 13 speaks about the signs of Jesus' physical return, but it is not talking about the time Jesus comes for His Church, which is called the **rapture!**

Some people teach a Post or Mid Tribulation return of Jesus, how the Church must endure all or part of the 7-year Tribulation

Others teach that when the destruction of the Temple happened in 70 A.D., these things Jesus warned of here, took place.

If the 2nd coming of Jesus happened back then, according to scripture, we would already be living in the Millennial Kingdom with perfect peace as Jesus is ruling and reigning on the earth.

But as early as 51 A.D., the Church was waiting for Christ to return. BTW, Revelation was not written until 90 A.D.

Paul wrote two letters to the *Thessalonians* because they were worried they had missed the rapture and had been left behind.

The whole premise of those letters was to assure the Church that God has a plan for them even though they were persecuted.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Paul also told that Church that God's Tribulation was not designed for His Followers...

1 Thessalonians 1:10 ...to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. NKJV

1 Thessalonians 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, NKJV

So, the Disciples ask some questions and Jesus points out some things they will see when the time is close at hand.

III. The beginning of sorrows.

Read *Mark 13:5-8*

There are some things Jesus points to as He answers the Disciples' questions about religious deception; Geopolitical upheavals; and natural disasters.

And there are some specific things we can point to, to show that these things could not have happened prior to our generation.

1. The rebirth of the Nation of Israel.

After the defeat of Israel in 70A.D., they ceased being a nation until 1948. Before 1948 the End Times could not happen.

No other nation in history ceased being a nation for 1900 years and then somehow became a nation once again.

2. The increase of weapons of mass destruction.

Today, there are believed to be around **16,300** nuclear weapons spread between these **nine countries**. No other generation in history had the possibility of mass destruction like we do.

3. Religious deception will happen as many deceivers will come and claim that they are the Messiah.

Many would be deceived as they anticipated Jesus' return.

There were 100's of scriptures promising a Messiah, but since those left behind did not accept Jesus as their rightful Messiah, once He is gone, others will come claiming to be the Christ.

Many false prophets, from the first century, and even until today, have appeared claiming to be **Messiah**.

4. Geopolitical upheavals with wars and rumors of wars.

When Jesus was speaking about wars and rumors of wars, He was not speaking of localized skirmishes, but of global conflicts.

Henry Ironside said, *“Ever since He ascended to heaven, wars and rumors of wars have been constant reminders of man’s folly in rejecting the Prince of Peace”*.

Jesus was speaking about globalized wars happening at the same time and happening with increasing frequency and **intensity**.

Statistics tell us that WWII was the deadliest war in history.

Some estimates say 80 million people died because of WWII which includes deaths from war-related disease and famine.

WWII was over in 1945 and was fought with that technology, but with the increase of technology and modern weapons the world can be annihilated instantly.

There are many current conflicts in the world today, in fact since the formation of the United Nations in 1945, there has never been a time when the world was without war.

WWII may have been bad, but it is nothing compared to the damage that can happen with modern weapons.

5. Increased natural disasters.

Jay Zagorsky, Economist and Research Scientist, at Ohio State, has said, *“Since 1980 there have been 212 disasters, which resulted in over \$1.2 trillion in damage.”*

A typical year in the 1980s experienced on average 2.7 such disasters in the U.S. In the 1990s and 2000s, that average had climbed to 4.6 and 5.4 a year, respectively.

How about Earthquakes? Earthquakes have increased from 1900 to 2014 by 400%.

Scientists have said, it is a matter of when, not if, that the Yellowstone volcano is going to erupt and when it does, North America will be covered by its lava and ash.

Also, scientists have recently discovered the largest volcano in the world, the size of New Mexico, under the Pacific Ocean.

*So where is all of this leading? **Matthew 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows. NKJV***

The occurrences described by Jesus in *Mark 13* are not the End but, they are creating the **foundation** for the End of the Age.

The 7-year Tribulation is currently restrained as the Lord said...

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. NKJV

As religious deceptions increase, and geopolitical upheavals happen, followed by natural disasters, people will cry out for peace, prosperity and security.

When these things; financial collapse, wars and rumors of wars and natural disasters happen, they demand an answer;

...all of this culminates with a One World Government for world peace.

Out of Chaos world leaders want order so, soon the world will accept an organization to police the different nations with law and order, and a very cunning man will step up as their leader.

The Anti-Christ and the Beast will make a one world Government with one monetary system and one policy making group.

IV. Practical Application.

Our heavenly Father knows exactly where we are at every moment, and nothing can happen to us that He is not aware of.

God often uses trials to strengthen our patience, allowing our Christian faith to mature and become **complete**.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

James 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

James 1:4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. NKJV

God hears the cries of His children and will answer those cries according to His perfect will and timing.

Psalm 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. NKJV

In order to trust the Lord and His timing for our lives, we must examine the One who has made the promises to us.

1. The proof of God's promises in His Word.

There are 100's of other prophecies in the Bible that have been fulfilled about the rise and fall of nations, and other matters.

The fulfillment of Biblical prophecy is evidence the men who wrote scripture, spoke for the all-knowing, all-powerful God.

No other book or person in the world is able to substantiate its claims with this kind ability to rightly foretell human events.

2. God's faithfulness in our past.

One of the reasons I always encourage a prayer journal for Christians is because we are forgetful people.

God is always faithful and when we journal about all the experiences where He has seen us through, when we are going through a trial, we have a reminder of how He meets our needs.

The fact that you are alive this morning is proof of God's faithfulness to you.

Psalm 3:3 But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. NKJV

3. God knows the beginning and end of all things.

In order to patiently wait on God's timing and not stress out about current events, we have to know God acts on our behalf.

We have to rely on Him and His timing to guide our lives, and not rely on our own abilities or our own timing.

As humans, what we can see and know is limited, but God's knowledge is unlimited He knows the end from the beginning.

Isaiah 46:9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me,

Isaiah 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' NKJV

It doesn't matter what we are waiting for; a job, a spouse, a house, a car, whatever it is, God's timing is always perfect.

When we get ahead of God with our decisions, we will always create havoc in our lives.

When we wait on the Lord, we display trust in the only One who can solve the situation. He has already been to tomorrow, so the Lord knows exactly what is needed and the perfect time as well.

Since His timing is perfect, sometimes He doesn't give us what we want, instead He protects and provides for us, giving us a better result and blessing.

4. When we learn to wait on God, we grow in our Faith.

Faith and Patience go together, because faith is believing what the Lord has promised will happen, will happen!

Hebrews 11:1 What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see. NLT

Many people give up too soon while waiting for an answer, but the Lord is faithful. He will answer if we simply trust Him, and wait on Him.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. NKJV

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

Resting in the Lord provides peace, but it also requires patience.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. NKJV

If Jesus was able to predict the destruction of the Temple with such precision, we can believe that He knows our future as well.

The Temple stood as an unmovable, unshakable display of might for the nation of Israel and yet it came crumbling down.

What things in your life are you trusting in that have the potential of tumbling down around you?

We can trust Jesus to forgive our past, take care of us in our present, and to work all things together for good, for our future.

With faith in Jesus Christ, we have the ability to not be moved.