

Gospel of Mark

Lesson 57 “The Sign of Christ’s Coming”

I. Introduction - We are continuing our series on “The Gospel of Mark” this morning as we discuss the Life and Ministry of Jesus.

A. Last week we saw Jesus tell His disciples that the Temple was going to be destroyed. They immediately asked Him **three questions**: When is the end of the age? What will be the sign of the end of the age? And what will be the sign of Your coming? **Matthew 24:1-3**

1. Last week we looked at the first two. We saw that **“the end of the age”** wasn't talking about the end of planet Earth. It was the end of the age connected to the Temple and the Old Covenant worship.
 - a. **Matthew 24:3** in **KJV** and **NLT** says end of the world, but the Greek says the end of the age.
 - b. **Mark 13:30** This generation was referring to the disciples and not us. Jesus was speaking to them about signs that would occur in there generation and not us.
2. This passage show Jesus wasn't guessing about the future. **He knew exactly what was coming when we understand what He said and then look at what actually happened, it should do something cause us to trust Jesus more!**
3. Today we're going to look at the third question: What is the sign of Christ's coming—His coming in judgment?

II. The Sign of Christ’s Coming

A. **Mark 13:14-28**

1. **Verse 14** When Jesus talks about the **“abomination of desolation,”** He tells the the reader understand. He’s pulling a concept from **Daniel 12:9-11**. In **Daniel**, the words were to be sealed...now Jesus saying let the reader understand.
 - a. The abomination of desolation refers to a pagan power invading and desecrating what belonged to God - **the temple**.
 - b. **Luke 21:20** makes it clear: **“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies....”** Roman soldiers marched under banners honoring Rome and Caesar as a god that the Jews considered idolatrous. **This was the sign Jesus was warning them about.**
 - d. **Daniel** says the regular sacrifice would be taken away. Some connect this to AD 66, when the Jews stopped the sacrifice offered on behalf of Caesar which ignited the war with Rome. Others connect it to the regular temple sacrifices that finally stopped in AD 70. **Either way, the picture is clear: the end of sacrifice, pagan power, the Temple and desolation were all coming.**

2. **Verses 15-18 makes it clear Jesus is warning people in Judea about a localized judgment and not talking to people in our day.** If you're on the roof, don't even go back inside; if you're in the field, don't go back for your clothes and He mentions how difficult fleeing would be for pregnant and nursing moms.

a. These are instructions for a localized event you could escape. If He was referring to the end of the planet, running to the mountains wouldn't help.

3. **Verse 19** Whose Jesus talking to; the disciples or us? Jesus is saying there had never been and would never again be a tribulation quite like this, because the temple would only be destroyed in this covenant-ending judgment once.

a. Jerusalem would fall, the Temple would come down, the sacrifices would end, and **that Old Covenant world would never be rebuilt again.**

b. This statement isn't about our future. It's about Israel's past.

4. In **Verses 20-23** Jesus says God would limit these days of judgment for the sake of His elect (God sovereignly spared some in Israel). Christians who had listened to His warning and fled to Pella.

a. Josephus claims more than a million Jews died and 97,000 were taken captive (numbers historians debate), but the devastation was enormous.

b. While Jerusalem was collapsing, false prophets were telling people God was going to miraculously deliver the city. Josephus even records people being drawn to the Temple expecting rescue, but Jesus had said, "Get out!"

5. **Verses 24-25** Jesus starts talking about **the sun going dark, the moon not giving its light, and the stars falling**. It sounds like He's describing the end of planet Earth, but He's intentionally using the dramatic, hyperbolic language of the Old Testament prophets. This is language His Jewish audience would have immediately recognized as describing **God's judgment and the fall of kingdoms.**

a. Babylon - **Isaiah 13:9-13, 17:** Isaiah prophesied Babylon's downfall centuries earlier. Babylon eventually fell to the Medes and Persians under Cyrus. **Isaiah 13:17** even explicitly names the **Medes.**

b. Think of the sun, moon, and stars as pictures of the powers that governed and gave order to their world—kings, rulers, nations, and kingdoms. When the prophets describe those lights going dark or stars falling, they're using **creation coming apart as a picture of a political or covenant world coming apart.**

c. Egypt - **Ezekiel 32:7-8:** There is a similar prophecy given about the destruction of Egypt. This was fulfilled in 567 BC when Babylon defeated Egypt under the direction of Nebuchadnezzar. Egypt didn't disappear from the planet. Its power was broken and glory faded.

d. Scholars like N. T. Wright, R. T. France, and Baptist theologian John Gill recognize this kind of cosmic language has deep roots in the Old Testament prophets, where it describes God's judgment and the downfall of nations.

e. Think about Joseph: **Genesis 37:9. His dream didn't refer to the solar system, but symbolic language about family.**

6. **Verses 26-27** So we've established Jesus is talking to a first century generation and not to us, but how do we understand Him coming in the clouds? **We are going to**

save that for next week because it would take too long to explain, so let's close by looking at Mark 13:30. Did this happen in that first century generation?

III. Conclusion - Jesus put His credibility on the line when He said, "*This generation will not pass away until all these things take place.*" Within that generation, Jerusalem fell and the Temple came down just as He said. So the question isn't just, "Did Jesus get prophecy right?"

A. The question is: "If Jesus knew their future that clearly, can I trust Him with mine?"

B. And the most important thing is to remember why Jesus brought the Old Covenant system to an end. It put walls and barriers between God and man. It produced guilt and condemnation, but it could never produce the intimacy and transformation God wanted for us. Jesus removed the barriers so we could come close.

C. Pray