



Pastor Richard Ross,  
October 11, 2020 message  
at Journey,  
JESUS ASKED message  
series on *God's Questions*  
in the *Gospel of Mark*

## "DO YOU SEE THESE GREAT BUILDINGS?"

### A. Intro: Perspective Shifts. What impresses, depresses, or stresses us?

*"Do you move to sadness, anger, anxiety, or despair easily? Many times, these are indications of idols in our hearts which take our eyes off Jesus..." - Pastor Noelani Jai (Jesus House OC)*

### B. Sermon in a Sentence: THE END IS NEAR – START PLANNING FOR IT.

### C. Context for Today's Question: Late on Tuesday of the final week before his crucifixion, Jesus takes a quiet moment to turn His disciples' gaze away from the polished stones of Herod's extravagant Temple toward the inner landscape He is creating in them through faith. He warns them, and all believers who follow, that we are living on the edge of The End of our fallen world.

### D. Lessons from Mark 13:1-13 & 33 (ESV) *For more on the End Times, read all of Mark 13 (study notes on back page).*

#### 1. Learn that impressive things are not final things.

<sup>1</sup> And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" <sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to him, "**Do you see these great buildings?** There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

#### 2. Brace yourself in Jesus, in faith, and in witness.

<sup>3</sup> And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" <sup>5</sup> And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. <sup>7</sup> And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>8</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

<sup>9</sup> "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. <sup>10</sup> And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. <sup>11</sup> And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup> And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. <sup>13</sup> And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

<sup>33</sup> Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.

### E. Study Questions for Small Groups or Personal Study

1. What is the most impressive building you've ever seen?
2. How do you see God building the Church of Christ in You?
3. Why does God call His Church to go through trials and temptations?
4. What spiritual birth pains do you see taking place in our world?
5. How easily do you stand up for Christ? How might God be preparing you to face persecution as His witness?
6. If these were your last few months to serve the Lord as His witness, how would you spend them?

## ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES

**13:1-37 *Jesus and the Coming Judgment.*** Jesus' discourse about the end times focuses the attention of the disciples on preparedness, on readiness to suffer, and on trust.

**13:1** Herod the Great expanded the second **temple** to about double the size of the Solomonic temple (cf. note on [Luke 21:5-6](#)).

Herod's Temple Mount was the focal point of Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. Sitting atop Jerusalem's northeastern ridge, it occupied one-sixth of the city's area. Under Herod the Great, the Temple Mount's foundation was expanded to encompass approximately 1.5 million square feet (140,000 square meters). Its foundational walls were constructed using gigantic stones, the largest found being 45 feet long, 11.5 feet high, and 12 feet thick (13.7 m by 3.5 m by 3.7 m).

**13:2** The future destruction of the temple (and Jerusalem) would occur on account of its misuse by the leaders ([12:9](#); [Luke 19:41-44](#)). (The sacrificial system of the temple cannot, in any case, make sufficient atonement for the sinfulness of mankind; [Heb. 10:4](#).) **not... one stone upon another.** See note on [Matt. 24:2](#). Titus, son of the emperor Vespasian, led the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 66-70.

**13:3** The **Mount of Olives** (Olivet), with its spectacular view of the Temple Mount, stands just east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley (see note on [John 18:1](#)). Jesus and his disciples regularly crossed over Olivet on their way from Jerusalem through Bethphage ([Luke 19:29](#)) to Bethany ([John 11:1](#)), which lay on the mountain's eastern slope. The traditional site of Gethsemane lies on Olivet's western slope ([Matt. 26:36](#)).

**13:4-37** In response to Jesus' statement about the future destruction of the temple ([v. 2](#)), the disciples ask him, "**When will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?**" Jesus' answer deals primarily with the second part of their question ("what will be the sign"), but he also addresses the timing of the coming events ("when"). [Verses 5-23](#) focus on local and world events (destruction of the temple, persecution, and universal evangelism); [vv. 24-27](#) focus on cosmic events (the transformation of the known cosmos and the coming of the Son of Man). The disciples assume that the destruction of the temple will coincide with the end of time, but Jesus corrects their thinking ([vv. 7, 13](#)). Since Jesus predicts these events, believers must not lose heart. The destruction of Jerusalem (which came in A.D. 70) functions as a type of the last judgment, which will occur when Jesus returns. God already knows about them, and the elect ([vv. 20, 22, 27](#)) will be preserved.

**13:8** The metaphor of **birth pains** (see note on [Matt. 24:8](#)) describes the increase in frequency and duration of these events.

**13:9-13** Amid these troubles, including family divisions ([v. 12](#); cf. [Luke 12:50-53](#)), the disciples are to be worldwide ([Mark 7:27](#); [8:35](#); [10:29](#); [13:27](#)), Spirit-led witnesses before both Jewish and Gentile authorities ([v. 9](#)).

**13:14** The **abomination of desolation** (cf. [Dan. 9:27](#); [11:31](#); [12:11](#)) points to the Antichrist's ultimate desecration of God's temple (**where he ought not to be**, which some understand as a literal, rebuilt temple, and others understand as the people of God; see [2 Thess. 2:1-12](#); [1 John 2:18](#)). This event was anticipated in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (see note on [Matt. 24:15](#)). **flee to the mountains.** See note on [Matt. 24:16](#).

**13:19** **Tribulation** will occur in conjunction with the Antichrist's desecration ([v. 14](#)). This tribulation will not be confined to Judea and will be on a scale unprecedented since the **beginning of the creation**. The flight of Christians from Jerusalem in A.D. 67 anticipated this universal tribulation (see note on [Matt. 24:16](#)).

**13:20** The universal extent of tribulations is **cut short** by the **Lord**. The **elect** ([vv. 22, 27](#)) are not a proud elite but recipients of God's gracious and undeserved call and protection (see note on [Matt. 22:14](#)).

**13:22** The tribulation ([v. 19](#)) is accompanied by **false christs and false prophets** (on testing false prophets, see notes on [Matt. 7:15-20](#);

[9:34](#); [1 John 4:1](#)). They **lead astray** by performing **signs and wonders** (cf. the actions of the Antichrist in [2 Thess. 2:3, 7-12](#); [1 John 2:18](#)). Unlike Scripture, signs and wonders are not clear indicators of God's presence and will. Jesus' remark that even **the elect** (see note on [Matt. 22:14](#)) could be led astray emphasizes the stunning character of the false prophets' miracles. But God will protect his own, so that they will not believe in a false messiah or prophet.

**13:24-26** **After that tribulation** clearly sets the further statements of Jesus apart from the preceding verses. **sun... moon... stars.** Jesus now describes cosmic events (see note on [Matt. 24:29](#)) in anticipation of the **coming** of the enthroned ([Mark 14:62](#)) **Son of Man** (see [8:38](#); [Rev. 1:7](#); note on [Matt. 24:30](#)).

**13:28-29** Some have understood **fig tree** here as a symbol for the nation of Israel (see note on [11:13-14](#)), but it is more likely that in this case Jesus is just using a familiar event in nature as another illustration: just as the fig tree's branches put forth **leaves**, giving a sure sign that **summer** would soon follow, so **when you see these things taking place, you know** that Christ will come soon. "These things" probably refers not to the events of [13:24-27](#) (for they *are* the end) but the events of [vv. 5-23](#).

**13:30** **this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.** Several interpretations have been offered for this difficult passage: (1) Some think "this generation" refers to the disciples who were alive when Jesus was speaking, and "all these things" refers to the beginning but not the completion of the sufferings described in [vv. 3-13](#). (2) Others see in "all these things" a prediction with multiple fulfillments, so that Jesus' disciples will be both "this generation" that sees the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 and also those at the end of the age who see the events surrounding the "abomination of desolation" ([v. 14](#)). (3) Since "the generation of..." in the OT can mean people who have a certain quality (cf. [Ps. 14:5](#); [24:6](#); cf. Gk. *genea* in [Luke 16:8](#)), others understand "this generation" to refer either (a) to "this generation of believers" throughout the entire present age, or (b) to "this evil generation" that will remain until Christ returns to establish his kingdom (cf. [Matt. 12:45](#); [Luke 11:29](#)). (4) Others, particularly dispensational interpreters, understand "generation" to mean "race" (this is another sense of Gk. *genea*), and think it refers to the Jewish people, who will not pass away until Christ returns. (5) Others understand "this generation" to mean the generation that sees "all these things" ([Matt. 24:33](#)), namely, the generation alive when the final period of great tribulation begins. According to this view, the illustration of the fig tree ([Mark 13:28](#)) shows that when the final events begin, Christ will come soon. Just as "these things" in [v. 29](#) refers to events leading up to but not including Christ's return, so in [v. 30](#) "all these things" refers to the same events (that is, the events described in [vv. 3-13](#)).

**13:31** **my words will not pass away.** Jesus claims that his words (like those of the OT, see [Matt. 5:18](#)) are more enduring than creation and are in truth the revealed Word of God (cf. [Isa. 51:6](#); [Jer. 31:35-37](#)).

**13:32** **nor the Son.** See note on [Matt. 24:36](#).

**13:33-37** Jesus gives this entire discourse about the end times so that the disciples will be **on guard** ([vv. 5, 9, 23](#)). This parable about **a man going on a journey** ([vv. 34-37](#)) displays similarities with the parable of the wicked tenants ([12:1-12](#)). The point is perpetual readiness while bearing God-given responsibilities. The sudden return of the **master of the house** corresponds to the sudden coming of the Son of Man (**find you asleep**, [13:36](#); see [Luke 17:24-32](#)). Instead of speculating about the specific timing of end-time events, **all** disciples are to be vigilant.