



## Countdown To Destruction

### Key idea:

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus prophesied that the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed during the lifetime of the generation then alive, and this was fulfilled in 70 AD, proving the authority and truth of Jesus' Word.

### Key text:

Mark 13:1-37

As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” <sup>2</sup> “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup> “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?” <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. <sup>7</sup> When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> “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. <sup>10</sup> And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. <sup>13</sup> All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup> “When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ standing where it does not belong — let the reader understand — then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>15</sup> Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. <sup>16</sup> Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. <sup>17</sup> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! <sup>18</sup> Pray that this will not take place in winter, <sup>19</sup> because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now — and never to be equaled again. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look,

here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect — if that were possible. <sup>23</sup> So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time. <sup>24</sup> "But in those days, following that distress, "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; <sup>25</sup> the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.' <sup>26</sup> "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> "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. <sup>29</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. <sup>30</sup> I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. <sup>32</sup> "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. <sup>34</sup> It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. <sup>35</sup> "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. <sup>36</sup> If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

### **Key points:**

1. Jesus was prophesying the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, not the end of the world.
2. The "abomination of desolation" refers to the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem.
3. The phrase "this generation" refers to the people Jesus was speaking to, not a future generation.
4. Jesus' words were fulfilled within 40 years, as the temple was destroyed in 70 AD.

### **Questions for discussion/application:**

1. How does understanding the historical context of Mark 13 change your interpretation of this passage?

2. Bret mentioned that many modern teachings misinterpret this passage. Have you encountered these interpretations before? How does this new understanding impact your view?
3. Discuss the importance of letting the Bible interpret itself rather than relying solely on modern teachings or traditions.
4. How does Jesus' accurate prophecy about the temple's destruction strengthen our faith in His other promises?
5. The sermon emphasized Jesus' authority and the truth of His words. How can we apply this trust in Jesus' words to our daily lives?
6. Reflect on the pastor's statement: "It would be easier for everything you can see to dissolve into nothingness than for one syllable I'm saying to not come true." How does this impact your view of Scripture?

#### Practical Applications:

1. Commit to studying Scripture in its proper context. Choose a challenging passage and research its historical and cultural background.
2. Reflect on areas in your life where you struggle to trust God's promises. How can you apply the certainty of Jesus' fulfilled prophecies to these situations?
3. Think of one way you can be more intentional about being a "student of the Word" in the coming week.
4. How may this understanding of Mark 13 change the way you approach conversations about end times prophecy with others.