

Theme: 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.

I. Intro - Late Great Planet Earth

- A. Huge selling book - NY Times says it was the biggest nonfiction of the decade of the 1970s
- B. Built on Jesus' Olivet discourse and other biblical texts
- C. He declared that once Israel became a nation again, the end of the world was imminent!
- D. I almost did not go to college - the world was ending by 1988! So glad I did not do that!
- E. Later the Left Behind series - the same view of the end
- F. But this whole idea is based on a misreading of Scripture - especially today's text!
- G. Special After Hours in coming weeks to go thru in detail

II. Jesus Prophesies the Temple's Destruction

- A. The text is about the 1st-century Temple
As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" ² "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." ³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" Mark 13:1-4
 - 1. Jesus had just declared the Temple desolate - utterly devoid of God's Presence (Matthew 23:38)

- 2. The disciples then talk about how magnificent the Temple is - once again they are clueless!
- 3. Jesus declares the Temple will be utterly destroyed!
- 4. The disciples ask 'When will this happen? What is the sign that the Temple is about to be destroyed?'
- 5. Jesus is answering this question - not another one about the world's end!
- 6. It is about the Temple He had taught in - not a later Temple to be rebuilt!

B. Life in this fallen world is NOT a sign

When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. **Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.** ⁸ 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.** Mark 13:7-8

- 1. There will be war, rumors, earthquakes, and famines - these happen throughout history!
- 2. These are not a sign that the end of the Temple is at hand - they are just the early 'labor pains'
- 3. He continues with things like persecution, family betrayal, and being hated for Jesus' sake - this is simply part of life in this fallen world.
- 4. We see these things recounted in the book of Acts - they were part of the life of the early church.
- 5. Secular historians also recount many wars, uprisings, and earthquakes between 30-70AD.
- 6. I see many posts about earthquakes, wars, and such things & say "Jesus' return is near!" But Jesus said these are NOT a sign, and the end in view is the end of the Temple - not the end of the world!

C. The sign - the abomination of desolation - flee!

“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. ¹⁵ Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. ¹⁶ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. Mark 13:14-16

1. The sign is the abomination of desolation (literal)
2. A phrase from Daniel (let the reader understand)
And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator. Daniel 9:27 ESV
 - a. A very obscure phrase in Daniel! (also 11:31; 12:11)
 - b. But Daniel’s visions center on 4 empires - Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.
 - c. Everything culminates during the Roman Empire
 - d. So this abomination of desolation had to happen during the days of the Roman empire (NOT thousands of years later!).
3. The Holy Spirit interprets this for us through Luke
When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. Luke 21:20-21
 - a. Luke writes for Gentiles & interprets it for them
 - b. The sign that the desolation is about to happen is when the Roman armies surround Jerusalem!
 - c. This is the sign that the countdown to destruction is in the final moments!
 - d. This is when everyone should flee away from Jerusalem!

e. Sadly, this happened near Passover, and hundreds of thousands of Jews fled INTO Jerusalem - and were destroyed along with the city and Temple.

4. But Jesus warned the disciples to flee when this happened, for Jerusalem and the Temple were NOT going to be delivered but rather desolated and destroyed!
5. This was fulfilled in 70 AD when the Romans besieged and then destroyed Jerusalem, desecrated the Temple, and killed an estimated 1 million people.

D. Jesus would come and judge apostate Israel

“At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.” Mark 13:26

1. Some think this must refer to Jesus’ visible return in glory at the end of the world - but it is not.
2. God’s Presence is often associated with a cloud
3. One of the images of God in the Old Testament is “the One Who rides the clouds”
Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds — his name is the LORD — and rejoice before him. Psalm 68:4

He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. Psalm 104:3
4. The image of God riding the clouds to judge nations is common in the Old Testament
An oracle concerning Egypt: See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before him, and the hearts of the Egyptians melt within them. Isaiah 19:1

The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry. ⁸ Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. ⁹ He parted the heavens and came down; **dark clouds were under his feet.** ¹⁰ He **mounted** the cherubim and flew; he **soared on the wings of the wind.** ¹¹ **He made darkness his covering,** his canopy around him — the **dark rain clouds** of the sky. Out of the brightness of his presence **clouds** advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. Psalm 18:7-12

- a. Note that none of this is 'literal' - God did not literally have smoke in His 'nostrils', nor did He 'literally' ride on the clouds.
 - b. Poetic/figurative language to speak of God coming as a warrior to judge the enemies of His people.
5. Jesus was saying He was going to come as the Divine cloud rider to bring judgment on apostate Israel and to deliver His people, the Church - including believing Jews and Gentiles.
6. Jesus is also alluding to Daniel 7:13-14
- "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a **son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.** He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ **He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him.** His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14
- a. Jesus said the Son of Man was coming (Mark 13:26)
 - b. This is the pre-eminent Son of Man text in the OT.
 - c. The Son of Man rides the clouds to be enthroned in heaven and to have all nations worship Him.

d. Though this wicked generation had rejected Jesus, He ascended to the Father, received authority, judged apostate Israel, and began calling people from every nation on earth to be His people.

E. All of this would happen to THIS GENERATION

I tell you the truth, **this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.** ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Mark 13:30-31

1. 'This generation' - those alive at that time.
2. The phrase 'this generation' is used 19 times in the New Testament and ALWAYS means the people alive at that particular time.
3. Jesus had just said that THIS GENERATION that would kill Him would be responsible and pay for all the people martyred for the faith (Matthew 23:36)
4. Jesus guaranteed in the strongest terms that His words regarding the coming destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem would come to pass within the next 40 years (a generation) - and they did!
5. Jesus Himself said that ALL THESE THINGS - everything He spoke of in v1-29 - would happen during the span of that generation.
6. Once again, this means that this whole chapter is not about the end of the world, but about the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Old Covenant (more next week).

III. Applying the Word

- A. Do I let the Bible or modern teachings speak the truth?
1. As a young believer, I listened to interpretations of this and other passages and ignored the actual text!

2. We must test everything by the text of Scripture!
3. This text is clear - it is about the destruction of the Temple, not the end of human history!
4. This text is clear - everything will happen during THIS GENERATION!
5. But when I first encountered a different understanding of the text it was hard to accept - because I had so many preconceived notions of what it must be teaching!
6. Be students of the Word - dig in and look at what Scripture actually teaches, not what others may say it teaches.

B. Do I see the authority and truth of Jesus' Word?

I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Mark 13:30-31

1. Jesus declared 'all these things' would happen during 'this generation' - and they all did!
2. Jesus' authoritative declaration had the authority and power to effect what He declared!
3. When He declared the Temple desolate it happened!
4. When He declared Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies and the Temple would be utterly destroyed it happened exactly as He said!
5. No one thought it would happen - they kept building the Temple and only finished in 63AD according to Josephus - and then it was destroyed as Jesus prophesied it would be!

6. It would be easier for heaven and earth to simply fade away into non-existence than for His Words to pass away!
7. This is true of Jesus' words in this chapter which were completely fulfilled in that generation, and it is true of everything He spoke!

8. This chapter is about the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Old Covenant era, but Jesus did speak about the final day when all will stand before Him

Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. John 5:28-29

9. Just as Jesus' Word about the future of the Temple was authoritative and true, so is His Word about what lies in each of our futures!
10. If you have never looked to Him, do so today, for His Word will certainly come to pass!
11. If you are a believer rejoice that His Word is true, and you will live forever!

C. The Table of the Lord

1. Here we recount the faithfulness of God in the past, receive strength for the present, and look to the future when God will fulfill every promise!
2. Come and be strengthened!

Countdown To Destruction

Mark 13

September 29, 2024

Communion

Revelation 1:4-6

Teaching keywords: Israel; judgement; Christology; eschatology

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. Every promise God has made, He will fulfill! 1 Corinthians 15:58

As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”² “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”⁴ Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you.”⁵ Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.⁶ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.⁷ 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.⁸ “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.⁹ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.¹² All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.¹³ “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.¹⁴ Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out.¹⁵ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.¹⁶ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!¹⁷ Pray that this will not take place in winter,¹⁸ because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now — and never to be equaled again.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it.²¹ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect — if that were possible.²² So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.²³ “But in those days, following that distress, “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light;²⁴ the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’²⁵ “At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.²⁶ 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.²⁷ “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.²⁸ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.²⁹ I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.³⁰ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.³¹ “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.³² Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.³³ 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.³⁴ “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.³⁵ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.³⁶ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” Mark 13:1-37