

## Watch

- Is there a clear word about the future? Yes! Jesus predicted 3 future events in the synoptic gospels.

**1-His own death and resurrection**—Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34

**2-The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70**—Mark 13:2-23; 28:31; 14:58

**3-His own future return**—Mark 8:38; 13:24-27; 14:25

References to Jesus' return can be found in every book in the New Testament except III John.

- The key word about the future is the word—“**watch**”—Mark 13:9; 13:23; 13:33; 13:34-35
- Jesus uses the word “**watch**”—“(v.32) However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. (v.33) And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert!”

Presently, there is a great preoccupation about the end times. Hundreds of books are being written and avidly read on the subject. Some people today are planning for the Lord's return within 2010. The unstable international situation further fuels this concern. The frustration of many Christians over evil and suffering has grown into an immense discouragement. Is God in charge? When will He fix all these problems and situations?

Mark 13 was written for times like these and for people like us. It is one of the most difficult passages to interpret and at the same time one of the most ***crucial*** to understand. There are always 3 things we must do with every passage of God's Word.

**1**-We must consider the people ***for*** whom Mark recorded Jesus' message.

**2**-We must carefully determine exactly what that ***message*** means.

**3**-We must ***apply*** what it says to ourselves today.

Christ followers were facing persecution, suffering, false prophets predicting the end of the world. What Jesus said during this last week of His earthly life was essential for them and for ***us*** ! This is the only message of hope in a dark world! We shall attempt to see and hear what Jesus says about the end of the world. I believe the chapter can best be understood if we focus on two major thoughts.

**What we might consider the end is often God's ***new beginning!*****

What we discern as death may in reality be the birth pangs of a new creation. Right in the middle of personal or social tragedy or difficulty, we are not to speculate that this may be the end of the world, but we should anticipate and enter into what God is about to do despite the worst that we can do.

**This is the thrust of Jesus' message:**

"(v.1) As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of the disciples said, 'Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls.' (v.2) Jesus replied, 'Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!'"

**"Later,**

(v.3) Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across the valley from the Temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately and asked him, (v.4) 'Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to be fulfilled?'

(v.5) Jesus replied, 'Don't let anyone mislead you, (v.6) for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.' They will deceive many. (v.7) And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately.'

'(v.8) Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many parts of the world, as well as famines. But this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.'

There it is! **A clear prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, not the end of the world!** Jesus is clarifying . . .

'The worst possible thing you can imagine will happen and will be repeated many times. When it does, don't be troubled and don't assume it's the end of the world and don't follow false prophets who say it is. God is not yet finished.'

What Jesus predicted in 30 A.D. and Mark recorded about 65 A.D. actually happened in 70 A.D. Anyone in or near Jerusalem when Titus swept down on the city, razing the buildings to the ground and slaughtering millions of Jews, would have thought that the end of the world had come.

**Josephus**, a contemporary historian, of that day, writes:

'No one visiting the city would believe it had ever been inhabited.'

But the world went on! And the tragedy of Jerusalem became the turning point of the expansion of the church. That's what was really happening back there in 70 A.D. And notice there was hope nestled in Jesus' words.

"In fact, unless the Lord shortens that time of calamity, not a single person will survive. But for the sake of his chosen ones he has shortened those days."

The great obstacle to the expansion of the Kingdom was removed. The church was liberated from being an appendage of Judaism!

The liberated Church now spread to the *Gentile* world—first the Roman Empire, then Europe, then the Americas, then Africa, and today to the uttermost parts of the earth.

**Preparation for the last things is best accomplished by concentrating on first things!**

First, seek the Kingdom of God.

Second, Watch.