

The Continuation of the Kingdom

The Olivet Discourse, Part Two

The Biblical Hope: Part VIII

Mark 13:1-37

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Outline of Mark 13

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I. Introduction

II. Turmoil (vv.5-8)

⁵...*"Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many. ⁷But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.*

The Roman world was afflicted by political, natural, and economic turmoil – especially in the Roman province of Judea. The *"history of the early church, in fact, shows that all these warnings were needed"* (Wright).

III. Persecution in Context of Evangelism (vv.9-13)

⁹*"But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. ¹⁰And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. ¹¹But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹²Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. ¹³And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

While preparing the disciples for arrest, mistreatment, interrogation, and betrayal, Jesus assures them that the Spirit will be with them and guide them as they bear witness to His Name. The book of Acts records specific examples of this opposition. The unbelieving Jews were incredibly hostile to the Church and filled up the full measure of their fathers' guilt (cf. Mt 23:31-36). But the NT also records the remarkable progress of the Gospel, *"which has come to you, as it has also in all the _____, and is bringing forth fruit..."* (Col 1:6 cf. 1:23).

IV. Desolation and Tribulation (vv.14-23)

¹⁴*"So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁷But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ¹⁸And pray that your flight may not be in winter. ¹⁹For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. ²⁰And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days. ²¹"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, He is there!' do not believe it. ²²For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.*

A. Abomination of Desolation (14-18 cf. Lk 21:20ff)

Jesus ties His warnings to a specific event (14): *when you see the _____ of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, then let those who are in Judea flee...* Luke interprets this phrase for his Gentile audience: *"But when you see _____ surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains..."* (Lk 21:20-21)

B. Great Tribulation (19-23 cf. 2 Kgs 18:5; 23:25; Jer 30:7a; Rev 1:9)

So why does Jesus use such graphic language to describe Jerusalem's downfall (19)? Jesus does not intend His words to be taken *literally* but _____. How do we know? Because the OT uses this same type of *hyperbole* (cp. 2 Kings 18:5 and 23:25 cf. Jer 30:7a).

V. Cosmic Upheaval (vv.24-27)

²⁴ *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.*

- A. The Linchpin of Futurism
- B. They will see the Son of Man (cf. Mk 14:61-62)
- C. Sun, moon, stars, and clouds
 - 1. The Symbolic Associations (cf. Gen 37:9-10)

Jesus’ language is saturated in the OT. He is using OT imagery to explain the theological significance of Jerusalem’s fall. Consider Joseph’s second dream:

⁹... *“Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.” ¹⁰So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?”*

Joseph’s dream revealed that those who were presently in *positions of _____ over him* would eventually become *subject to him*.

- 2. Darkness is Falling (cf. Is 13:1-19; 14:3-23; 19:1; Ezek 32:1-8)

When the OT prophets announce God’s judgment on the nations, they utilize this cosmic, symbolic imagery. Consider Isaiah’s oracle of judgment against Babylon:

¹ *The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw... ⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. ¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine...¹³ Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger...*

Ezekiel uses similar symbolic language to describe Egypt’s destruction:

² *“Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him... ⁷ When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, And the moon shall not give her light. ⁸ All the bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you, And bring darkness upon your land,” Says the Lord GOD.*

When God acts in judgment upon a people in this way, He is often described as *“coming with the _____ of heaven,”* manifesting His power. *“The burden against Egypt. Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, And will come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst”* (Is 19:1).

- D. Angelic Messengers (cf. 2 Chr 26:15-16; Mk 1:2; Lk 9:51-52)

The Greek word for _____ – *angelos* – is the same word used to describe John the Baptist: *“Behold I send My messenger before my face, who will prepare the way before Me”* (1:2). Jesus is prophesying the worldwide mission of the Church.

VI. Let the Reader Understand

Jesus’ discourse urges us to read the Scriptures carefully and wisely (13:14). This requires that we saturate ourselves in the Scriptures. The Scriptures regularly use hyperbole and symbolism to communicate truth – and we need to attune ourselves to such figures of speech.