THE GOSPEL MUST FIRST BE PREACHED

Mark 13:1-25

Key Verse 10

And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

**Introduction**



In the passion week Jesus came to Jerusalem as King riding on a colt. Then he cleared the temple courts by driving out those who were buying and selling there and not allowing anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. Then religious leaders came with questions. But Jesus answered them wisely and taught them the truth. In today’s passage Jesus tells us about the end times and how we Christians should live. Jesus’ teaching today is not to scare us but to help us to know what God is going to do at the end times and how we live a life of faith fulfilling God’s purpose for our lives. Let us see where we are in God’s redemptive history and have a clear life-direction, especially in this pandemic and protest. Let us hold on to Jesus’ teaching the most today and live as gospel workers in our times continually.

1. Read verses 1-4. What did Jesus’ disciples say about the temple? (1) Describe Jesus’ response to this statement. (2) What further questions did the disciples ask Jesus? (3, 4)

1-1, Read verses 1-4.

As Jesus 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; everyone 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?”

1-2, What did Jesus’ disciples say about the temple? (1)

***As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”***

* As Jesus and his disciples were leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”
* According to Josephus, the temple which Herod built was built of huge marble stones—some of these stones were 40 feet long, 12 feet high and 18 feet wide.
* Its eastern front was covered with plates of gold. And in the sunny morning, due to its reflection by the sunlight, people could not look at it.
* It was indeed spectacular. The disciple was impressed by massive stones and magnificent buildings.

1-3, Describe Jesus’ response to this statement. (2)

***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.”***

* Jesus told him that the temple would be completely destroyed. Every stone would be taken down and completely dismantled.
* This prediction of Jesus was fulfilled when Roman General Titus invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the temple completely.
* Jesus’ prediction here teaches us how to see things of the world. The disciple was fascinated by the impressive temple buildings.
* But we all know that things of the world will perish, spoil or fade away. They would be either destroyed by human hands or ruined by the erosion.
* Nothing in this world is permanent. Many magnificent things are made and invented in our times. Like the disciple, we can be amazed easily.
* But we must open our eyes to see where the world is going. All the glory of this world will crumble like the temple of Herod.
* The world is heading to eternal destruction. We must see beyond the things of this world. Our Lord will come with new heaven and a new earth in his glory.
* God’s judgment will surely come upon the world. May we live before God with a living hope in the kingdom of God, clearly perceiving the destiny of the world.

1-4, What further questions did the disciples ask Jesus? (3, 4)

***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?”***

* The disciples must have been shocked by Jesus’ prediction about the temple. They thought that the temple would stand forever.
* But the disciples didn’t say, “Teacher, That’s impossible. We cannot believe it.” Rather they believed Jesus’ words and asked him 2 questions.

1. Read verses 5-13. Why might Jesus have described certain signs and events as the beginning of birth pains? (5-8) Who will persecute Christians? (9, 11a, 12, 13a) What must we do? (10) Who is helping us at the time of persecutions? (11b) What promise is given? (13b)

2-1, Read verses 5-13.

5 Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many. 7 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.

9 “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. 10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11 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.

12 “Brother will betray brother to death, and father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

2-2, Why might Jesus have described certain signs and events as the beginning of birth pains? (5-8)

***5 Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.***

* As the first sign that Jesus mentioned here is false saviors that will come in Jesus’ name and deceive Jesus’ people.
* These false saviors may be very deceptive people or human ideas like communism, hedonism, materialism or technology
* Christians are coerced to give up their claim that Jesus is the only Way for salvation and accept and respect others’ ideas and religions as of equal credibility.
* In this kind of atmosphere, we can feel uneasy and compromise with false saviors in order to get along with others.
* But Jesus tells us to watch out that no one deceives us. We must hang on to Jesus our true savior.
* Jesus alone is our Savior, for he came and died on the cross to pay the price of our sins and rose again from the dead to bring us back to his glorious kingdom.

***7 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.***

* When we hear of wars and rumors of wars. But Jesus said, “Do not be alarmed.” Instead we must believe that God is in control.
* As Jesus said, the end is still to come. God brings the world to an end, not human wars. We must trust God and have a great assurance of his love.
* In addition to wars, there are natural disasters such as earthquakes, famine and other natural digesters.
* These digesters are tragic. But Jesus says that these are the beginning of birth pains. Birth pains are difficult to bear. But birth pain is the sign of a new life.
* In the same way, troubles and sufferings of the world are the VERY prelude of the coming of God’s glorious kingdom.
* When the kingdom of God comes, all pain and suffering of this world will be forgotten. We will have new life in God’s kingdom where God reigns.
* So when we hear of wars and natural digesters, we Christians are to renew our hope in God’s glorious kingdom.

2-3, Who will persecute Christians? (9, 11a, 12, 13a)

***“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. 11 Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. 12 “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13 Everyone will hate you because of me,***

* To Christians, persecutions are inevitable, because our Lord Jesus was persecuted throughout his messianic life and died in persecution.
* Ungodly people hate Christians. Jesus says that the world hates us because Jesus has chosen us out of the world (Jn 15:18-19).
* Today even Christians in North America are persecuted. We are pressured to conform to the godless culture of our times.
* But we must know that Christians are persecuted on account of Jesus. Those who follow Christ truly as committed disciples are persecuted.
* Even family members hate us and persecute us. But we must stand firm to the end, though we might suffer from persecution for a while.

2-4, What must we do? (10)

***10 And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.***

* In the midst of talking about the persecution of Christians, Jesus suddenly mentions that the gospel must first be preached.
* But this is the heart of God that God wants all sinners in all nations to be saved through the gospel.
* The gospel is the good news from God that is about Jesus Christ. It is the good news that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)
* So many people perish simply because they do not hear the gospel. God’s primary concern is saving sinners through the gospel.
* Romans 1:16 reads, Gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.
* In keeping with God’s heart, St. Paul urges all Christians in 2 Tim 4:2, “Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season…”
* We must participate in God’s love and earnest compassion for the world and share the gospel with the perishing in season and out of season.
* Jesus wants even one more person to come to him and be saved. So to the very end of the end times, he wants the gospel to be preached to all nations.
* We must earnestly pray for a world mission. We must take part in God’s soul saving work by preaching the gospel in season or out of season.
* Jesus says, “The gospel must first be preached to all nations.” We have many things to do in this world. We need to earn our bread and butter.
* We need to do many other things to improve the quality of our life. But Jesus sets us our life priority. The gospel must first be preached.
* May God help each one of us to preach the gospel of Jesus in the midst of our busy lives! We are called to preach the gospel particularly to campus students.
* Whether we are sowers of the seed of the gospel or reapers of it, we are to keep on sharing the gospel with young students.
* Whether we have a significant outcome from this mission or not, we must preach the gospel in season and out of season because so many people are perishing.
* Gospel sharing is to be our top priority. This is what Jesus wants us to do. Even on the cross, Jesus preached the gospel through one to one bible study.
* Even after his resurrection, the risen Jesus shared the gospel with his disciples. May God help us to put the gospel ahead of anything and everything.

2-5, Who is helping us at the time of persecutions? (11b)

***Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.***

* We should not be afraid of persecution, because Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to help us (11).

2-6, What promise is given? (13b)

***but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.***

1. Read verses 14-25. Describe the days of distress and the Lord’s instructions in shortening hardships. (14-20) What further warnings were given? (21-23) What will happen after the days of distress? (24-25) Based on Jesus’ words, what then should be our view of the world and history?

3-1, Read verses 14-25.

14 “When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24732a)] standing where it[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24732b)] does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. 16 Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. 17 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18 Pray that this will not take place in winter, 19 because those will be days of distress unequaled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.

20 “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. 21 At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. 22 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 23 So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

24 “But in those days, following that distress,

“‘the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light;

25 the stars will fall from the sky,

and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24743c)]

3-2, Describe the days of distress and the Lord’s instructions in shortening hardships. (14-20)

***14 “When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24732a)***] standing where it[***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24732b)***] does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. 16 Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. 17 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18 Pray that this will not take place in winter, 19 because those will be days of distress unequaled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.***

***20 “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.***

* On one level, this event refers to the Roman army which invaded the Temple and defiled it. They placed the pig’s head in the place of worship.
* The immediate prediction was the destruction of the temple. It actually came to pass. This part refers to the historical event that happened in 70 A.D.
* But also this describes the terrible event that will take place before the Second Coming of Jesus.
* The characteristic of the abomination is that it causes desolation. It is to be avoided at all costs.
* Jesus advised God’s people to flee to the mountains and not to go back to home to get material possessions.
* Jesus is concerned about the pregnant women and nursing mothers tribulations. For the sake of the elect, the Lord had shortened the days of distress.
* Jesus also predicted that the sun would be darkened and the moon would not give its light and the stars would fall from the sky before his Second Coming.
* In this time of tribulation we must trust God and rely on him because there will be no other way to save ourselves. Money cannot save us or friends cannot save us.
* Only God can save us. Acts 2:21 says, “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

3-3, What further warnings were given? (21-23)

***At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. 22 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 23 So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.***

3-4, What will happen after the days of distress? (24-25)

***24 “But in those days, following that distress,***

***“‘the sun will be darkened,***

***and the moon will not give its light;***

***25***

***the stars will fall from the sky,***

***and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+13&version=NIV#fen-NIV-24743c)***]***

3-5, Based on Jesus’ words, what then should be our view of the world and history?

* Based on Jesus’ words, we should have our Jesus’ view of this world and history instead of a different perspective.
* In this pandemic and protests, we are tempted to focus on different things with anxiety. But God is the Lord and our Master who still sustains the universe.
* The Lord should not be the one who should revise His way, rather we are those who should repent of our sins and adjust our priority on Him and His words.
* May the Lord help us to increase our faith day by day so that we may continue to devote ourselves to His redemptive plan and world mission purpose.

**Conclusion**

Jesus wants us to preach the gospel in these troubled times as our first priority. All things in the world will perish and spoil and fade away. But the gospel message we preach will remain forever because it saves people’s lives. When we stand firm to the end, Jesus will take us to his kingdom. When we leave our earthly tent and get into the kingdom of God Jesus will wipe every tear from our eyes and we will meet all other Christians in New Jerusalem and live with Jesus forever. I pray that God may bless us to be Jesus’ faithful witnesses to all kinds of students. May God help us to prepare the Second Coming of Jesus with prayer and Bible study.

**One word: The gospel must first be preached!**