

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. 19th Nov. 2006

The Kingdom - 'Christ is coming'

Mark 13: 1 – 8 – Signs of the End of the Age



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

No one apart from God the Father knows when Jesus will return. Verse 1 has one of the disciples saying: "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" and Jesus replies with a most amazing prediction "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." Though we don't know exactly what the temple looked like it must have been amazing, for in its time it was considered one of the architectural wonders of the world. Jesus' prediction that a structure so immense would be levelled to the ground seemed implausible.

As in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, the destruction of the Jews' beloved temple would be God's judgment against them for turning away from him. Jeremiah had spoken God's words to the rebellious nation, ([See Jeremiah 9:11](#)). Jerusalem had been attacked and leveled before.

Here Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem and the beautiful temple would again be completely destroyed. This happened a few decades later when the Romans sacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

What are we to learn from this prediction and its fulfillment? Firstly the bedrock of faith is not in our Temples and grand Cathedrals. **Secondly** the bedrock of faith is not in Signs. **The bedrock of faith is in Christ.** Following this they asked Him when this momentous event would take place and what would happen to indicate it was soon to occur. Their questions revealed that their understanding of prophecy was still quite confused. They thought that the destruction of the temple coincided with the end of the age and the return of their Lord ([Matt. 24:3](#)). But their questions gave Jesus the opportunity to deliver a prophetic message. The prophet Zechariah predicted that the Messiah would stand on the mountain when he returned to set up his eternal kingdom ([Zechariah 14:1-4](#)). This was a fitting place for the disciples to ask Jesus when he would come in power and what they could expect at that time.

Verses 5 to 8 reveal 4 things: firstly, we are to be ready and watchful; **secondly**, we must continue to proclaim and share the good news with honesty and integrity; **thirdly**, we may have to endure great trials **and finally** we must wait patiently for his return.

Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately because they wanted to understand what Jesus meant and when this terrible destruction would happen. ([verse 4](#)) The disciples' wanted to know when *these things* would happen and what *sign* would show that *they are all about to be fulfilled*. The second part of their question referred to the end of the age. In the disciples' minds, one event would occur immediately after the other. Some of the disciples lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, while some of the events Jesus spoke of have not yet—to this day—occurred. But the truth of Jesus' prediction regarding Jerusalem assured the disciples and assures us that everything else Jesus predicted will also happen.

Jesus instructed his disciples and all his followers not to be afraid that somehow God had lost control of his creation or that his promises would not come true. Just as false messiahs and religious frauds come and go, so do worldly crises. Even when the world's situation gets worse, God is in control and in him we can find a place of strength and comfort. ([See Psalm 46](#))

War's suffering prompts us to want the world to end and Christ to return. Jesus tells us not to be alarmed. God is in control; Jesus is coming. Worldly empires will rise and fall. God promises peace of heart no matter what happens. The "wars and rumours of wars", the nations at odds, and the earth's turmoil revealed in increased earthquakes and famines do *not* signal the end. Instead, this is *but the beginning of the birth pains*; ([verse 8](#)) Jesus' words reveal to us that this world will not endure forever and though it appears that there will be great tribulation, we believe that God is watching over us.

Witness: Questions to discuss



1. How can we guard against worshipping the building instead of God?
2. In the light of current world events, how should we as Christians respond?
3. Do you ever feel that God is not in control?
4. Are we ready & watchful, sharing the good news, ready to endure trials and waiting patiently for his return?