**End of Days**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 13:1-12**

**Wednesday Evening**

**July 31, 2019**

**1 Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"**

Saints, Jesus and the disciples were leaving the Temple (this may have been either Tuesday or Wednesday evening of the week before the Crucifixion). This was Jesus’ last visit to the Temple area. He would do no more preaching or public teaching.

One of the disciples remarked on the incredible beauty of the Temple. Although no one knows exactly what this Temple looked like, it must have been magnificent, for in its time it was considered one of the architectural wonders of the world. This was not Solomon’s Temple—it had been destroyed by the Babylonians in the seventh century B.C. (2 Kings 25:8-10).

**2 Kings 25:8-10**

8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

9 He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

Saints, this Temple had been built by Ezra after the return from exile in the sixth century B.C. (Ezra 6:14-15), desecrated by the Seleucids in the second century B.C., reconsecrated by the Maccabees soon afterward, and enormously expanded by Herod the Great.

**Ezra 6:14-17**

14 So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

15 Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. 16 Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.

Saints, the Temple was impressive, covering about one-sixth of the land area of the ancient city of Jerusalem. It was not one building, but a majestic mixture of porches, colonnades, separate small edifices, and courts surrounding the Temple proper—hence the comment about the tremendous buildings. Outside these courts were long porches. Solomon’s porch was 1,562 feet long; the royal porch was decorated with 160 columns stretching along its 921-foot length.

**Photos of the Temple>**

The Temple’s foundation was so solid that it is believed that some of the original footings remain to this day.

The Jews were convinced of the permanence of this magnificent structure, not only because of the stability of construction, but also because it represented God’s presence among them. The massive stones the disciple mentioned were huge white stones, some of them measuring twenty-five by eight by twelve feet and weighing more than one hundred tons.

**2 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."**

Saints, Jesus made a startling statement: These magnificent buildings would be completely demolished. The destruction of the Jews’ beloved Temple would be God’s judgment against them for turning away from him.

This happened only a few decades later when the Romans sacked Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Gazing at the massive stones, the disciples surely found it difficult to believe that not one of the stones would be left on top of another.

**Micah 3:8-12**

8 But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, And of justice and might, To declare to Jacob his transgression And to Israel his sin. 9 Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And pervert all equity, 10 Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity:

11 Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD, and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us." 12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest.

**Jeremiah 26:6-9**

6 then I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." ' " 7 So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. 8 Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You will surely die!

9 Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant'?" And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

Because the Temple symbolized God’s presence among them, the Jews would be horrified to see it destroyed.

**3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4 Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"**

The Mount of Olives rises above Jerusalem to the east. As Jesus left the city to return to Bethany for the night, he would have crossed the Kidron Valley and then headed up the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

From this slope, he and the disciples could look down into the city and see the Temple, with the sun setting behind it to the west. Four disciples came to Jesus privately because they wanted to understand what Jesus meant and when this terrible destruction would happen. Their question had two parts:

**1. They wanted to know when this would happen especially the destruction of the Temple**

**2. What sign would show that Jesus’ words will 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. They expected the Messiah to inaugurate his Kingdom soon, and they wanted to know the sign that it was about to arrive.

Jesus gave them a prophetic picture of that time, including events leading up to it. He also talked about far future events connected with the last days and his Second Coming, when he would return to earth to judge all people.

Like much of Old Testament prophecy, Jesus predicted both near and distant events without putting them in chronological order. The coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple only foreshadowed a future destruction that would ultimately usher in God’s Kingdom. Jesus was predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the end times.

**5 And Jesus, answering them, began to say: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 6 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and will deceive many.**

Saints, Jesus first answered the disciples’ second question about the end of the age and the coming Kingdom. The disciples wondered what sign would reveal these things, but Jesus warned them against seeking signs,

**“Don’t let anyone mislead you”**

Jesus knew that if the disciples looked for signs, they would be susceptible to being deceived. There would be many who would come claiming to be the Messiah. Jesus predicted that before his return, many believers would be led astray by false teachers claiming to be Christ.

In every generation since Christ’s resurrection, certain individuals have claimed to be the Christ or to know exactly when Jesus would return. Obviously, no one else has been Christ, and no one has been right about the timing of the Second Coming. According to Scripture, the one clear sign of Christ’s return will be his unmistakable appearance in the clouds, which will be seen by all people.

**Revelation 1:7-8**

7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

In other words, believers never have to wonder whether a certain person is the Messiah.

**7 But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. 8 For 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.**

Saints, the key phrase in this verse comforts all believers,

**“Do Not Be Troubled.”**

As political situations worsen, as wars and rumors of wars ravage the world, 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. These things must come as part of God’s divine plan.

However, the wars and rumors of wars do not signal the end of the world. The disciples probably assumed that the Temple would only be destroyed at the end of the world as part of God establishing his new Kingdom. Jesus taught that horrible events would happen, but the end won’t follow immediately.

Instead, this is only the beginning of the horrors to come; in other words, these would be preliminary sufferings.

**New York Times Reports:**

**What is a war?** War is defined as an active conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives. Has the world ever been at peace?

**Of the past** 3,400 years, humans have been entirely at peace for 268 of them, or just 8 percent of recorded history. How many people have died in war? At least 108 million people were killed in wars in the twentieth century. Estimates for the total number killed in wars throughout all of human history range from 150 million to 1 billion.

**Chart of increased Earthquakes>**

**New York Times:**

**The annual** number of “great” earthquakes nearly tripled over the last decade, providing a reminder to Americans that unruptured faults like those in the northwest United States might be due for a Big One. Between 2004 and 2014, 18 earthquakes with magnitudes of 8.0 or more rattled subduction zones around the globe.

**That's an increase** of 265 percent over the average rate of the previous century, which saw 71 great quakes, according to a report to the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America this week in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Jesus’ words subtly explained to the eager disciples that there would be a span of time before the end of the age and the coming Kingdom—it would not happen this week, or immediately upon Jesus’ resurrection, or even right after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Instead, much suffering would occur as a part of life on earth, while history is moving toward a single, final, God-planned goal—the creation of a new earth and a new Kingdom (Revelation 21:1-3).

**Revelation 21:1-4**

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

**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.**

Saints, Jesus personalized his prophecy by explaining that the disciples themselves would face severe persecution; thus, they must be on their guard in order to stay true to the faith. Being handed over to the courts referred to the local Jewish courts held in the synagogues. They would also find themselves standing trial before Gentile governors and kings. But such trials would have a purpose—the disciples were to tell them about Jesus.

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

Saints, Jesus said that before his return, the Good News of the Kingdom (the message of salvation) would be preached to every nation.

This was the disciples’ mission—and it is ours. Jesus talked about the end times and final judgment to emphasize to his followers the urgency of spreading the gospel. By the time Mark’s readers would hear these words, Jesus’ prediction had already begun to happen. It occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11) and was spreading to all the world.

**Acts 2:38-42**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

**11 But 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.**

Saints, not if the disciples would go on trial, but when they are arrested and stand trial, they were not to worry about defending themselves, but instead they were to concentrate on proclaiming the gospel.

The Holy Spirit would give them God’s peace and the words to say. These words would help the disciples be bold witnesses as they made their defense before the rulers (13:9). Notice that Jesus did not guarantee acquittal. James, one of the disciples here listening to Jesus, would be killed because of his faith (Acts 12:1-2).

**Acts 7:59-60**

59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

**Acts 12:1-2**

1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. 2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**