

## The Olivet Discourse | WEEK 50 | Mark 13:1-37



### Appalling Sacrilege and Necessity for Flight | 13:14-23

- *Most direct answer to “When will these things happen?” “vs. 4.*
- *Disciples should flee when an act of sacrilege is so appalling that it can only invite unparalleled tribulation.*
- *Terminology is borrowed from Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11. Daniel describes an abomination so detestable it causes the Temple to be abandoned and provokes desolation.*
  - *First fulfillment was when Antiochus IV Epiphanes erected a small altar to Zeus over the altar of burnt offering, offered a pig and made the practice of Judaism a capital offense.*
  - *Jesus indicates the prophecy is not ultimately fulfilled by that Maccabean period offense.*
  - *He warned there would occur another profane act so appalling that the Temple would be rejected by God as a place for his glory (Ezekiel 7:14-23).*

## Appalling Sacrilege and Necessity for Flight | 13:14-23

- *Flight is necessary to escape the coming judgment.*
  - *Jerusalem is usually regarded as the place of refuge, but here the massive walls will offer no protection. The city would trap the inhabitants into judgment.*
  - *Eusebius wrote “But before the war, the people of the Church of Jerusalem were bidden in an oracle . . . to depart from the city and to dwell in a city of Perea called Pella..”*
  - *The saying Eusebius refers is apparently verse 14. Josephus recounts many left the city.*
  - *AD 67–68, Zealots who believed the Temple would be destroyed by war through a Jewish prophecy, occupied the Temple and allowed criminals to freely roam the Holy of Holies and committed murder. Then they promoted a clown, Phanni, to be high priest.*
  - *Retired high priest Ananus responded with tears “It would have been far better for me to have died before I had seen the house of God laden with such abominations and its unapproachable and hallowed places crowded with the feet of murderers.”*
  - *Jews considered this an abomination. Christians likely recognized Phanni as the abomination standing where HE does not belong and fled to Pella. Jerusalem is on a mountain (Moriah) so the Jews fled to the next mountain range where Pella was located.*

## An Introduction to “Temple” in Scripture

- *Jesus rejects the Jew’s false hope that they could gather together at the Temple for protection because God had promised to never leave his Temple (Isa 1:2-21, Jer 7:1-8, esp 4).*
- *Jesus condemns Jerusalem as an unclean (leprous) house that must have every stone thrown down and hauled out to an unclean place according to Levitical law (Lev 13:33-45)*
  - *35 – The owner of the house should report it . . .but the priests (tenants) did not (Mark 11:17).*
  - *39 – If the leprosy has spread . . . and it had (Mark 12:1-8).*
  - *40 – The priest shall declare it unclean . . . and Christ did (Mark 11:17).*
  - *40 – Have the contaminated stones torn out and thrown into an unclean place . . . and the Romans did just that to the Second Temple under the direction of God*
- *And he invites them to come to himself as the new Temple (Matt 12:1-8).*
- *Why does Jesus refer to himself as the Temple? On what grounds is Jesus a Temple?*

## Pattern of the “Temple” in Scripture

### 1. *Defeat of chaos.*

*(Enemies pictured a number of ways, with the temple often built using material plundered from the enemy)*

### 2. *Establishment of cosmos.*

*(The royal residence of God from which he sovereignly rules)*

## First Pattern of the “Temple” | Creation

— *The Establishment of the Temple is patterned after Creation –*

- *Chaos is pictured as a monster (Job 26:7-14 Rahab = chaos monster of mythology)*
- *Whose defeat by a hero-god results in a regulated cosmos (Ps. 74:12-17)*
- *Summary: God wins the creative victory (chaos to cosmos) and establishes a royal residence (temple) from which he exercises sovereignty preserving cosmic order*
- *This pattern is repeated 7 times in Scripture as creation is reenacted*



## 7 Patterns of Creation Repeated in Scripture

### *Repeated in 2 Redemptions of this Present World*

1. *2 Pet. 3:5-7 Peter describes two recreations of the cosmic order, the first out of the flood of Noah and the second out of the fire of the day of the Lord*
2. *The fire of the Last Day (defeat of Man of Sin and the purification of the final cosmic temple) 2 Thes. 2:3-8 (and Matt. 24:15)*

### *Repeated in 2 Redemptions of Israel*

3. *1<sup>st</sup> exodus (especially redemption from the Red Sea) is patterned on a re-enactment of creation.*
4. *2<sup>nd</sup> exodus (Is. 45:11-25)*

### *Repeated in 2 Redemptions of the New World*

5. *The first Advent – specifically the redemptive Passion Week*
6. *The second Advent*

## 7 Patterns of Creation Repeated in Scripture

### *7. Personal Redemption = Individual Salvation*

*—He who commanded light to shine out of darkness is the one who shines into the hearts of His people (2 Cor. 4:6) bringing them from darkness to light (2 Pet. 2:9) and making them a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).*

- *Redemption in the pattern of creation totally corresponds in that both are the direct work of God*
- *The process is the same: the Spirit moves, the Word is spoken, and light shines out of darkness.*
- *Both require a defeat of the serpent (Matt. 12:29)*
- *The conclusion is the same: the angles who sang over creation (Job 38:6-7) rejoice together over the sinner that finds repentance (Luke 15:10)*


*—God is the Father of Lights (James 1:17) and Jesus is the Light of the World (John 8:12)*

*—God is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2) and the Lamb is the Light of heaven (Rev. 21:23)*

*—Hebrews interprets the salvation of a sinner as entering God's Sabbath rest in creation and Canaan rest in the exodus (Heb. 3-4)*

## Patterns of the “Temple” Repeated in Scripture

— *God’s tabernacling in the cosmos He created – Psalm 104, Isa 66:1, Matt 5:35, 2 Pet 3:5*

- 
1. **Tabernacle of Israel** – Ex 40:34-35 (gold taken from Egyptians)
  2. **First Temple** (Solomon’s) – 1 Kings 8:10-11 (wood from Tyre, gold from Ophir)  
— *Note: Glory leaves in Ezekiel 7-9*
  3. **Second Temple** (Herod’s) – Mt 23:17, 21 (supplies taken from Babylon – Neh 2:8)
  4. **Jesus Christ** – Matt 12:1-8, Jn 2:19
  5. **Believer in Jesus Christ** – 1 Cor 3:16-17, 2 Cor 6:16, Rev 3:12, Mark 3:27 (from defeat of the strong man, Satan)
  6. **Church of Jesus Christ** – Eph 2:21-22, 1 Cor 3:17 (collective defeat of Satan)
  7. **Eternal Temple** (in heaven) – Ezekiel 40:1-43:27, Heb 8:5, Rev 14:17, 15:5, 6, 8, 16:1, 17, 21:22 (partially from materials redeemed by fire from the first creation)

## The Triumph of the Son of Man | 13:24-27

— *Juxtaposed against the false hopes that mislead many (21-23) is this real hope that the Son of Man will finish his redemption when he comes in power and glory.*

- 24 – *The relationship between Christ’s first advent and his second advent swings on a single, simple statement, “In those days, after that tribulation.”*
- *“In those days” in the OT has no set time but carries an end-times association (Jer 3:16-18, 31:29, 33:15-18, Joel 2:28-32, Zech 8:18-23)*
  - *This is a period after the days of tribulation (19-20). But how much after, we are not told.*
  - *The Parousia cannot take place until after all the prerequisites (5-23) have taken place. They are precursors but do not set a fixed date.*
  - *Jesus simply declares the suffering we can expect and the final triumph that resolves all the tensions and paradoxes of our existence.*
  - *The baseline event however, is the destruction of the Temple.*

## The Triumph of the Son of Man | 13:24-27

- 24-25 – *No other section of this discourse has more scriptural imagery and language. Through common motifs and keywords, we are presented with the coming of the Son of Man on the great Day of the Lord for the gathering of his people.*
  - *“The sun and moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining” – Joel 2:10, 3:15, Is 13:9-13, 34:1-8, Ezek 32:7-8, Amos 8:9*
  - *The dissolving of the cosmic structure frequently indicates the intervention of God in human history. The universe is united with man in his destiny. And the prophets who predicted the judgments on man spoke freely of an upheaval in the heavens themselves.*
  - *The judgment on Jerusalem in Chapter 13 marks the passing of one era and establishment of another where the glory of God is no longer concentrated in the Temple but in the Son.*
  - *Note the first three parallel statements in 24-25 is summed up in the fourth statement possibly as a contrast with the signs and wonders of the false prophet in 22 (see Joel 2:30 “wonders” = signs).*

## The Triumph of the Son of Man | 13:24-27

- 26-27 – *All of these actions are attributed to the Son of Man. He displays the signs, he comes, he gathers the elect for indeed they are “his”.*
  - *In Daniel 7:13-14, the Son of Man is brought to God’s throne. Here he only comes to gather his elect, a function attributed to God in the OT (Duet 30:3- , Psalm 50:3-5, Is 43:6, 66:8, Jer 32:37, Ezek 34:13, 36:24, Zech 2:6, 10).*
  - *The Parousia in Chap 13 is reconciled with the rejection of the Son of Man in 8:31 through the revelation of Christ as Judge in 8:38 which vindicates all false claims (5-6, 21-22).*
  - *In the Parousia all the contradictions of the present are resolved.*
- *Christ coming with his angels (13:27, 8:38) to gather elect links Duet 30:4 & Zech 2:10-13.*
  - *OT “to scatter to the four winds” = the loss of national unity in Israel. “To gather his elect from the four winds” = the salvation of Israel through a return to national unity.*
  - *Here Jesus reinterprets Israel’s hope shifting the place of gathering from the Temple in Jerusalem (as the place of gathering) to the Temple of Christ’s body.*
  - *The destruction of the Temple would not mean God has forsaken Israel completely. The remnant of Israel will recover their lost unity through Jesus, the triumphant Son of Man.*



## The Lesson of the Fig Tree | 13:28-31

- Here Jesus answers the disciple's original question as to "when will these things happen?"
  - "These things" are the same things as vs 4, 23, 29, 30. They do not refer to the destruction in vs 24-25 nor to the Parousia in 26-27.
  - The recurring use of "these things" requires this interpretation. Before the passing of a generation, Jerusalem and the Temple will lie in ruins.
- 28-29 – The fig tree loses its leaves in winter and blooms very late in the Spring. When the sap can be felt, winter is certainly passed (Song of Sol 2:11-13).
  - So the parable points to the sprouting of the fig tree as a starting point of destruction.
  - If Jesus gave this parable at Passover, the fig tree would have been in this condition.
  - The addition of "it is near, right at the door" reinforces this point.
  - The profaning of the temple in 14 means the destruction of the Temple is imminent in 2.
  - Note link "When you see" between 29 echoing 14. When you see the profaning, flee!
- 30 – "This generation" clearly references contemporaries of Jesus (8:12, 38, 9:19). \
- 31 – Here we see the enduring quality of God and his Word compared to the only apparent durability of the created universe (Ps 102:25-27, Is 40:6-8, 51:6). Christ's prophecy concerning the Temple will most certainly come to pass.

## The Call to Vigilance | 13:32-37

- The duty to "watch" hinges on the fact that "no one knows."
- "That day" is "The Day of the Lord" the Day of Yahweh's appearing (in Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Joel, Zechariah).
- Capitalized Days in Scripture –
  - "The Day" – Psalm 118:22-24 (cf. Mark 12:10) = the Day of Redemption
  - "Today" – Psalm 95:6-9 (cf Hebrews 3:14-4"10) = the Day of personal salvation, it becomes a personal Sabbath)
  - "The Day of the Lord" - Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Obadiah, Joel, Zechariah = the Day of judgment at the revelation of Jesus Christ

## The Call to Vigilance | 13:32-37

- *While the parable of the fig tree tells us we can know the proximity of the Day of the Lord, we cannot know the day or the hour (the smallest unit of time in that day).*
  - *32 – “No one knows that day or that hour . . .”*
  - *33 – “For you do not know the critical moment.”*
  - *35 – “For you do not know when the lord of the household comes.”*
  - *The mysterious moment of divine intervention cannot be foreseen.*
  - *Because the moment is unknowable, unceasing vigilance is imperative.*
  
- *37 – “What I say to you, I say to everyone. Watch!” = The message is for both the immediate disciples and for the Church of Christ at large. The Church is called to live vigilantly in the certainty of Christ’s coming.*