

Mark My Words: Signs of Jesus' Second Coming

Message 1 of 5 in the series: "Marked"

A. Just a few days before He was crucified, Jesus prophesied that Herod's Temple in Jerusalem would one day be completely demolished.

"As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, 'Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls.' Jesus replied, 'Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished. **Not one stone will be left on top of another!**' Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across the valley from the Temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately and asked him, 'Tell us, when will all this happen? **What sign will show us that these things are about to be fulfilled?**'" Mark 13:1-4 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus' prophecy of the utter destruction of Herod's Temple was fulfilled in AD 70 exactly as He said.

B. Jesus also gave his disciples a number of prophetic signs that will serve as precursors to His second coming.

1. Many false Messiahs will come. "Jesus replied, 'Don't let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, "I am the Messiah." They will deceive many... Then if anyone tells you, "Look, here is the Messiah," or "There he is," don't believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. **Watch out! I have warned you about this ahead of time!**'" Mark 13:5-6 & 21-23 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Jesus' second coming will NOT be secret. "So if someone tells you, 'Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,' don't bother to go and look. Or, 'Look, he is hiding here,' don't believe it! For **as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes.**"

Matthew 24:26-27 (NLT)

2. Many wars and natural disasters will take place. "And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many parts of the world, as well as famines. But **this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.**" Mark 13:7-8 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Signs of the end times will increase in frequency and intensity as the time of Jesus' second coming draws near just as birth pains do before a child is born.

3. Followers of Christ will suffer betrayal, persecution, hatred, and death. "When these things begin to happen, **watch out!** You will be handed over to the local councils and **beaten** in the synagogues. You will **stand trial** before governors and kings because you are my followers. **But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me. For the Good News must first be preached to all nations.** But when you are arrested and stand trial, don't worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit. A brother will **betray** his brother to death, a father will betray his own child, and children will rebel against their parents and cause them to **be killed. And everyone will hate you because you are my followers.** But the one who endures to the end will be saved." Mark 13:9-13 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! God loves sinful people so much that He will use even the persecution and martyrdom of Christians as opportunities to reach people who would otherwise never hear the gospel. "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are **called according to his purpose for them.**" Romans 8:28 (NLT)

4. A period of global suffering and trouble (great tribulation) will come. During this time, a wicked world ruler (the Antichrist/man of lawlessness) will come to power claiming to be God, and a sacrilegious statue of the Antichrist (the abomination of desolation) will be set up in the Temple in Jerusalem. "**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. Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter. **For 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. And 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."

Mark 13:14-20 (NKJV)

"For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed—the one who brings destruction. He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. **He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.**" 2 Thessalonians 2:3b-4 (NLT) "The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings. And **as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration**, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him." Daniel 9:27 (NLT) "**He ordered the people to make a great statue of the first beast**, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life. **He was then permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak.** Then the statue of the beast commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die." Revelation 13:14b-15 (NLT)

5. There will be cosmic disorder in the heavens. "At that time, after the anguish of those days, **the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky**, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken." Mark 13:24-25 (NLT)

C. When Jesus comes again, He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords NOT as a baby.

"Then **everyone will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory**. And he will send out his angels to gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven." Mark 13:26-27 (NLT)

"Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war... The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses... He will release the fierce **wrath** of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. On his robe at his thigh was written this title: **King of all kings and Lord of all lords.**"

Revelation 19:11, 14, & 15b-16 (NLT)

D. Jesus didn't give us signs of the end times to make us scared. He wants us to be prepared.

"Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. In the same way, **when you see all these things taking place, you can know that his return is very near**, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene before all these things take place. Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear."

Mark 13:28-31 (NLT)

1. Jesus DOES NOT want us wasting time trying to figure out the exact date of His return. "However, **no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen**, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert." Mark 13:32-33 (NLT)
2. Jesus DOES want us to carry out the work He has given us to do. "The coming of the Son of Man can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. **When he left home, he gave each of his slaves instructions about the work they were to do**, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return. You, too, must keep watch! For you don't know when the master of the household will return—in the evening, at midnight, before dawn, or at daybreak. **Don't let him find you sleeping when he arrives without warning.** I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for him!" Mark 13:34-37 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions:

Read Mark 13 and then discuss the following questions:

1. How does reading/hearing Bible prophecies about the end times make you feel? (afraid, encouraged, enlightened, confused, etc.) Why do you think you feel this way?
2. How significant is it to you that Jesus' prophecy of the utter destruction of Herod's temple took place 35-40 years later exactly as He said it would? (Mark 13:1-2)
3. Discuss the following signs Jesus prophesied would be precursors to His second coming:

- Many false Messiahs will come. (Mark 13:5-6 & 21-23, Matthew 24:26-27)
- Many wars and natural disasters will take place. (Mark 13:7-8)
- Followers of Christ will suffer betrayal, persecution, hatred, and death. (Mark 13:9-13, Romans 8:28)
- A period of great suffering and trouble (great tribulation) will come. During this time, a wicked world ruler (the Antichrist/man of lawlessness) will come to power claiming to be God, and a sacrilegious statue of the Antichrist (the abomination of desolation) will be set up in the temple in Jerusalem. (Mark 13:14-20, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Daniel 9:27, Revelation 13:14-15)
- There will be cosmic disorder in the heavens. (Mark 13:24-25)

Why do you think Jesus compared these signs to birth pains?

4. How will Jesus' second coming be different from His first coming? (Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 13:26-27, Revelation 19:11-17)
5. Why do you think some people spend a great deal of time and effort writing books, making movies, and developing elaborate websites dedicated to determining the exact date of Jesus' second coming when Jesus clearly said no one will know? (Mark 13:32-33)
6. What would it look like if Christians everywhere lived as if they really believed Jesus could come back at any moment? What priorities/activities/attitudes might change?
7. Visit www.opendoors.org to find some information about persecuted Christians around the world. Then spend some time praying as a group.