

FROM ONE SERVANT TO ANOTHER

Your Certain Future

Mark 13

INTRODUCTION: Congratulations, graduates. You have made amazing accomplishments. Congratulations, parents. You have had such a big part in this. Graduation is a time that people look and think about the future.

So much of the future is uncertain. Even brilliant people get it wrong when they start forecasting years ahead of their time.

- In 1911 the famous Thomas Edison predicted that alchemy would be perfected and that it would be an easy matter to convert a truckload of iron bars into gold, proving that even the inventor of the light bulb occasionally had one loose.
- In 1920, the New York Times said, "A rocket will never be able to leave Earth's atmosphere." The Times has had trouble getting the truth into orbit ever since.
- In 1995 the inventor of the Ethernet Cable predicted that the internet would go supernova the next year and catastrophically collapse. – oops!

But one of the things that separates God from the people He created is that God knows the end from the beginning. God knows the future.

Jesus told us some things that will happen with certainty in the future, and I believe that what He said makes it clear that some of these events will unquestionably take place in your future, graduates, and in your future, students, hoping one day to graduate.

They are events that impact all of us and all of those we love and care about.

They should impact our present living and our planning for the future.

Our text this morning is Mark 13, but the truth of this passage cannot be explained just from Mark 13. Most of this passage is about the end times. Especially about portions of the Scripture that speak concerning the end times, we must remember

Two principles of biblical interpretation:

1. Every portion of Scripture is absolutely true.
2. Not every portion of Scripture is complete.

So while **What I am going to share with you today is described in Mark 13,**

only with the aid of what God revealed to Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Matthew, Paul, and John,

can we gain clarity in God's certain plan for the future.

Do you understand? Are you with me?

You may remember that we looked at the major events of the end times just a couple of months ago when we considered Matthew 24. But these events have their greatest impact on you young people, and it is extremely important for you to know what our Lord declared about the years that are ahead of you.

Now, I believe I am going to see these things in my lifetime. But I am exceedingly confident that you will see it in yours.

What did Jesus say will happen?

I. JESUS SAID THE TEMPLE WOULD BE DESTROYED.

Mark 13:1-2 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!"

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."

Now some of you just thought, "Wait a minute, Bro. Mike. That is not end times stuff. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Roman General Titus."

How right you are. But when Jesus said this, it was still some 40 years in the future. But Jesus knew the future. He did not make an educated guess. He knew! He even said that not a single stone would be left standing.

Who could guess such a prediction? What could raise the ire of Rome over an already conquered land and people? And even if the Roman Legions were to attack the Jews most famous site and building, why would every stone be thrown down?

But Jesus did not guess; He knew. In 66 AD a rebellion arose among the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem against their Roman oppressors. They formed an independent government and sealed the walls of Jerusalem against the armies of Rome. In 70 A.D., the newly enthroned Vespasian sent his son, the General Titus to break the rebellion by destroying the capital city, Jerusalem.

In less than six months, the Romans breached the walls of the great city and eventually set the Temple on fire. The fire raged uncontrolled for weeks, eventually melting all of the gold and much of the other metal that provided the fittings and the overlays of the temple walls inside and out. After the temple collapsed upon itself and the site had cooled from the inferno, Roman soldiers and other scavengers came to the site, throwing every stone of the temple to the side to uncover the

stones that comprised the paving in and around the temple complex, because the melted gold had run into the seams between the stones.

The gold hunters pried up every single stone seeking to mine the gold that had flowed like lava into every crack available.

Thus, “every stone, every stone was thrown down.”

Now, I take the time to tell you this detail of history so that you can understand that Jesus knew, without question or doubt, what would happen 40 years after He spoke this prophecy of the temple.

But for the Son of God, it does not matter if it is 40 years or 400 years, or 4,000 years, He knows the end from the beginning. And all these things that He described will certainly be a part of your future.

II. JESUS SAID A HORRIBLE TIME OF TRIBULATION IS COMING ON THE EARTH.

Mark 13:14-15, 19 14 “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. 15 Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. 19 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.

I find it difficult to convince people what a horrific seven years the Tribulation is going to be. But the Bible shows us this.

- In the first half of the Tribulation more than one-half of the population of the world will die.
- Two-thirds of the entire Jewish population will be killed making the holocaust look like nothing more than a preview of the real thing.
- Although every Christian will be taken off of the earth in the rapture before the Tribulation begins, during the first half of this terrible time,
 - a great multitude from around the globe will hear the gospel and be saved.
 - But most of them will be beheaded for their faith or otherwise have their lives taken away as martyrs.
- Satan himself will possess and control the most evil man the world has ever known, and eventually this man will take control of the entire planet.

Listen to me, those of you who remain lost in your sins because you will not repent and turn in faith to the Son of God who died for you upon the cross,

- Even if you are getting old like me, you may yet enter the tribulation and experience its horrors.
- And the younger you are, the more likely it is, that if you are without Christ, you will die a gruesome death sometime during these seven years. And when death comes it will not bring even a moment of relief for you will awaken in hell and the torment of flames.

And I know some of you are saying, “Come on, preacher, lighten up. In this modern day we don’t like hellfire and brimstone sermons!” Let me tell you, hellfire and brimstone in a sermon is better than being swallowed up in the real thing!

What would you have me do? Do you want me to just ignore the clear warnings given by the One who came down from Heaven, gave His life on a cross to save us, and rose on the third day as the Exalted King of Glory? Shall I attempt to reduce His stern declaration of the future to childish allegory or meaningless symbolism?

Do you not know that some of these teenagers who sit here this morning having never put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are most certainly going to see these things come to pass, and if they do not get saved through the marvelous grace of Jesus as they put their faith in Him, they will not be able to count the times through the endless years of eternity that they will scream to themselves, “I wished I had listened to that preacher when He told me what Jesus said was going to happen.”

And after warning people about this horrible time called the Tribulation,

III. THEN JESUS SAID, “I AM COMING BACK!”

Mark 13:24-27 24 “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25 the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Like the angels said when that great crowd of new believers gathered around Jesus and watched their Savior ascend back into heaven, those angels declared, “This same Jesus is coming back in like manner.”

The devil will have his day during the seven years of Tribulation, but then King Jesus rides out of heaven on a white horse and lays claim to the earth He created and begins to reign as the King of the Universe. Among His first acts will be to bind Satan and to cast him into the abyss.

And then Jesus will set up His Kingdom on Earth.

- He Himself shall reign as King of Kings.
- Resurrected King David shall rule over Israel and each of the twelve apostles shall govern as the Judge of each of Israel's twelve tribes.
- And then faithful Christian believers who followed King Jesus out of Heaven back to the earth shall be appointed as kings over nations, governors over states, mayors over cities, judges in courts that shall really grant justice to the wronged and to the oppressed, and to all the other places of governance and administration as they take their place in the reign of Jesus Christ of Nazareth as the King of the Earth.
- Oh my friend, young and old, this is really going to happen. And while we do not know the day or the hour, it could be no more than seven years and a few minutes away.
- But I am telling you young people, you are going to see this in your lifetime even if I do not see it until after I die. You will. I show you how I know in a moment. But this is reality. This is going to happen. And every one of us, will be in existence when this takes place. None of us will be a hapless state of suspended animation. We will all be somewhere. The lost burning in hell where the flame cannot be quenched. The saved living in the Millennial Kingdom, each one assigned according to how they did their work for the Kingdom while they lived upon this earth. Those who lived and worked faithfully for Christ rather than for their own pleasure and comfort will be made rulers over much. But the saved who lived their lives frivolously for their own pleasure will only be given charge over little.

And I know some of you are asking, how do you know this is going to happen before these young people die? I am glad you asked. Because the next thing Jesus said was that

IV. JESUS IDENTIFIED THE SEASON OF HIS COMING.

Mark 13:28, 30 28 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.
30 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

I have taught you the detail of this before, and time will not allow that detail now. But when you put what Mark said with Matthew and the other Bible authors, you learn that the blooming of the fig tree pictures the rebirth of the nation of Israel. Jesus said, "The generation that sees that happen will not all die before the Tribulation begins."

The rebirth of Israel happened on May 14, 1948. Right now, the longest life in recent history is 125 years. Say, due to advances in medicine that lifespan advances to 130 years.

The last person of the generation that saw the budding of the fig tree will almost certainly die within the next 60 years. Before he or she does, the Tribulation will begin. Seven years later, Christ returns.

So, while I still have hope that I will see this fulfilment from the vantage point of earth rather than from heaven, you most certainly will!

Finally,

V. JESUS GAVE INSTRUCTIONS ON WHAT WE ARE TO DO.

Mark 13:33-37 33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. 34 *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— 36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you, I say to all: **Watch!**”

A. **Take heed!** Listen up! Beware!

- **Be saved** so you won't have to enter the Tribulation.
- Trust in Christ who will forgive your sins and keep you out of hell which is a very real place.
- Become a follower of Christ, and He will take you home to Heaven to live there while the Tribulation rages on the earth, then you can come back when King Jesus sets up His Kingdom on the earth.

B. **Watch**

- so you will be **ready** when the time comes unexpectedly.
- You see we know the season, but we don't know when in that season it is all going to start.

C. **Do the work** the Master has appointed you to do until He comes.

- **Be a witness of Jesus.**
- **Share the gospel.**
- **Go – Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Ends of the Earth**

- **Make disciples** – followers of the Lord Jesus, so they can live with Him and enjoy Him forever as you can.

CONCLUSION: Listen graduates, and all of you other young people. Give your lives to

1. Make a difference in people's lives. What greater difference can you make than leading them to Christ and making disciples out of them?
2. Make a difference while you are a young adult.
 - These are years often wasted in people's lives, years that are filled with things they later regret and sometimes things that hinder them the rest of their lives.
 - But these can be years in which you make a tremendous impact in the lives of your peers and in other age groups as well

Jesus knows the future. He has told you what is going to happen, and how you can come out on the good side of it all. **You've been warned.** You have no excuse.