



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V23 N23

June 6, 2021

## KING JESUS

“The End of the World as We Know it (Part 2)”

Mark 13:28-37

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Eternity

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom.

*“I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”*

John 14:2-3



What are we to learn from Jesus' two end-time parables?

In his Olivet Discourse (Mk 13:1-37), Jesus predicts the destruction of the existing temple, which occurred at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 70. In A.D. 66 the Jews of Judea rebelled against their Roman masters, and Nero responded by sending Vespasian's army to regain control. Within two years, he eliminated Jewish resistance in the northern part of the province and turned his attention on subjugating Jerusalem. In A.D. 68, Nero died by his own hand, creating a power vacuum in Rome. In the resultant chaos, Vespasian was declared Emperor and returned to the Imperial City. It fell to his son, Titus, to lead the Roman army in the assault on Jerusalem. Rome's legions surrounded the city and began to slowly squeeze the life out of the Jewish stronghold. Within two years, the attackers had breached Jerusalem's outer walls and began a systematic ransacking of the city. The assault culminated in the burning and destruction of the temple that served as the center of Judaism.

Josephus describes the scene: “Then one of the soldiers, without awaiting any orders and with no dread of so momentous a deed, but urged on by some supernatural force, snatched a blazing piece of wood and, climbing on another soldier's back, hurled the flaming brand through a low golden window that gave access, on the north side, to the rooms that surrounded the sanctuary. As the flames shot up, the Jews let out a shout of dismay that matched the tragedy; they flocked to the rescue, with no thought of sparing their lives or husbanding their strength; for the sacred structure that they had constantly guarded with such devotion was vanishing before their very eyes . . . While the Temple was ablaze, the attackers plundered it, and countless people who were caught by them were slaughtered. There was no pity for age and no regard was accorded rank; children and old men, laymen and priests, alike were butchered; every class was pursued and crushed in the grip of war, whether they cried out for mercy or offered resistance. Through the roar of the flames streaming far and wide, the groans of the falling victims

were heard; such was the height of the hill and the magnitude of the blazing pile that the entire city seemed to be ablaze; and the noise—nothing more deafening and frightening could be imagined . . . The Temple Mount, everywhere enveloped in flames, seemed to be boiling over from its base; yet the blood seemed more abundant than the flames and the numbers of the slain greater than those of the slayers. The soldiers climbed over heaps of bodies as they chased the fugitives” (“The Romans Destroy Jerusalem 70 AD,” Eyewitness to History, [www.eyewitnesstohistory.com](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com) [2005]).

In victory, the Romans slaughtered thousands. Of those spared from death, thousands more were enslaved and sent to toil in the mines of Egypt, others were dispersed to arenas throughout the Empire to be butchered for the amusement of the public. The temple's sacred relics were taken to Rome where they were displayed in celebration of the victory. The rebellion sputtered on for another three years and was finally extinguished in A.D. 73 with the fall of the various pockets of resistance including the stronghold at Masada.

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus also predicts the coming of the Son of Man, *yet to occur*. His coming will follow “that distress” (Mk 13:24; cf., v. 19), namely the distress (cf., “tribulation,” ESV) of those days following “the abomination that causes desolation” (v. 14), leaving readers to conclude that the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 and the abomination of desolation that preceded it, *foreshadow* a future destruction of a *rebuilt* temple, following a future abomination. One commentator explains: “The conquest of Jerusalem is theologically (not chronologically) attached to the end-time events (cf., Dan. 9:26-27; Luke 21:24). The expression ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ is the link between the *historical* [past] and *eschatological* [future] perspectives (cf. Dan. 11:31 with Dan. 9:27; 12:11). These ‘near’ tribulations *foreshadowed* the ‘far’ Tribulation of the end time” (John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 169, italics added)

28 *"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 29 Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. 30 Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

32 *"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.*

35 *"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "lesson" in v. 28.
- Underline "these things" and "it" in v. 29.
- Double underline "this generation" and "all these things" in v. 30.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 31.
- Box "but about" indicating *transition* in v. 32.
- Bracket "nor the Son" in v. 32.
- Highlight "Be on guard" and "Be alert" in v. 33.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 34.
- Circle "keep watch" in vv. 34, 35 and "Watch" in v. 37.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Mark 13:28-37 contains two *parables* (i.e., comparisons). Identify the verse in which each one is found.
  2. The *point* of each parable (i.e., analogy) is explained in the verse following each. Identify the point of each one.
  3. Verse 29 refers to something the disciples will “see,” namely, “*these things* happening.” To what is Jesus referring?
  4. When the disciples “see these things happening,” they know “*it* is near.” To what does “*it*” refer?
  5. Jesus’ generation saw the destruction of the temple/Jerusalem but not the coming of the Son of Man. How are we to understand verse 30?
  6. Explain the *contrast* in verse 31 and what it implies about Jesus.
  7. *What* doesn’t “the Son” know and *why* doesn’t he know it?
  8. Identify the “owner of the house” in Jesus’ parable.
  9. Put the meaning of verse 35 in your own words.
  10. **Discussion:** Talk about what we learn from Mark 13:28-37.
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### Commentary On The Text

Following Jesus' stunning prediction regarding the destruction of the temple in Mark 13:2, four disciples ask two questions (vv. 3-4), which Jesus answers in reverse order. *First*, in verses 5-27, he addresses their question regarding "the sign" pertaining to the temple's destruction—as well as to Jesus' coming and the end of the age (Mt 24:3; cf., Mk 13:24-27). Then *second*, in verses 28-37, he addresses their question about "when" these things will happen. The discourse unfolds as follows: verses 5-13 describe events *prior* to "the abomination that causes desolation" (v. 14); verses 15-23 describe events *following* that unmistakable event; verses 24-27 describe the coming of the Son of Man following the "suffering" (NET; cf., "tribulation," ESV) sparked by the desecration of the temple; and finally, verses 28-36 describe two parables that pertain to the timing of the destruction of the temple, city, and return of the Son of Man.

The first *parable* (cf., "lesson," NIV) is found in verse 28. In this case, the "fig tree" does not represent Israel as it does in 11:12-14, 20-21. Here it simply illustrates the relationship between something *seen* and something *future*. One commentator writes: "Though the fig tree was sometimes used as a symbol for Israel (11:14), Jesus did not intend such a meaning here (in Luke 21:29 the words 'and all the trees' are added). In contrast with most of Palestine's trees, fig trees lose their leaves in winter and bloom later in the spring. Thus whenever the stiff, dry, winter **twigs** become **tender**, softened due to the rising sap, and **leaves** appear, then observers **know that** winter is past and summer is near" (John D. Grassmick, "Mark," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 172). Seeing these changes in the fig tree (v. 28) is *analogous* to seeing "these things happening" (v. 29). And thus knowing that summer is near is *analogous* to knowing that "it (cf., 'he,' NET, ESV) is near, right at the door." Since the discourse is about the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, "these things" must refer to the events of verses 5-23, especially an "abomination that causes desolation" (v. 14)—namely, "the occupation and profaning of the temple in A.D. 67-68 by Jewish Zealots, who also installed a usurper, Phanni, as high priest" (Grassmick, 169). Another commentator puts the analogy this way: "Just as the new leaves of a fig-tree signal that summer is near, so the 'abomination' that desecrates the temple is a sign that the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem is imminent and that it is time to leave Judah" (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 335).

Stressing the permanence of his words—implying that his words are God's words (see Ps 102:25-27; Isa 40:6-8; 51:6)—Jesus assures his disciples, saying, "Truly I tell you, *this generation* will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened" (v. 30). Since the discourse is *about* the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, "this generation" must refer to those Jews living in Jesus' time, who witness the *historical* "abomination that causes desolation" and later see the destruction of Jerusalem. However, since the discourse is *also about* the coming of the Son of Man, "this generation" must also refer to those Jews living in the future, who witness the *eschatological* "abomination that causes desolation," who afterward experience unprecedented suffering, and who then see the coming of the Son of Man.

The second parable (cf., "it's like a man") is found in verse 34. Jesus tells the parable to illustrate the fact that no one knows "about that day or hour," that is, no one knows when the day of the Lord, which includes the coming of the Son of Man in judgment, will occur. All anyone knows is that it may occur at any time. "It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch." In this parable, "the man" likely refers to the Lord and "his servants" to his disciples. Just as the man's servants are to carry out their assigned tasks diligently and the doorkeeper is to "keep watch," so also are the Lord's disciples to carry out their assigned tasks diligently and "keep watch." Allusion to the four watches of the night underscores the need to be alert at all times. "No time is slack time" (Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34B, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, 341). Sleeping while the master's away is risky business because you certainly don't want him to catch you asleep when he returns.

One commentator summarizes the *emphasis* of the Olivet Discourse and its *implications* this way: "The outstanding emphasis in Mark's account of this discourse is clear. Disciples need to take heed (Gr. *blepo*, to be aware, to observe, to discern; vv. 5, 9, 23, 33), to be vigilant (Gr. *agrupneo*, to be awake, to watch; v. 33), and to be watchful (Gr. *gregoreo*, to be awake, attentive, vigilant, and circumspect; vv. 33, 35, 37)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Mark," 2021 ed., 279, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf)). After all, while they know that the Son of Man is coming in the future, they do not know exactly when and should not let themselves be deceived by those who think they do.

## Word Studies/Notes

v. 28 *lesson* Cf., “Learn this parable from the fig tree” (NET). “Jesus’s parable may use the budding of the fig tree here simply as an example of a sign that something is to follow” (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 618).

v. 29 *it* Cf., “he” (NET, ESV). “The sequence ‘these things . . . all these things’ in verses 29-30 follow the order of ‘these things . . . all these things’ in verse 4” (Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 334-35). On the antecedent of the pronoun, one commentator writes: “The unstated subject of the Greek verb ‘is’ could be rendered ‘He’ (the Son of Man) or preferably **it** (‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ v. 14)” (Grassmick, 172). Another writes: “The parable of the budding fig tree now concerns the coming of the ‘son of man.’ Therefore the implied subject of [*estin*], ‘is,’ is either ‘he,’ that is, the ‘son of man,’ or ‘it,’ in reference to the ‘coming’ of the ‘son of man’ (v 26)” (Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 34B, *Mark* 8:27-16:20, 334). Still another writes: “The lesson of the fig tree involves the fall of Jerusalem, not the parousia” [i.e., the appearing of the Son of Man] (Stein, 618). Given the fact that verses 5-23, especially the reference to “the abomination that causes desolation” (v. 14), pertain to both the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and to the return of the Son of Man in the future, in the first case, “it” refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and in the second, “he” refers “to the return of the Son of Man.”

v. 30 *this generation* I.e., the generation that “see[s] these things happening” (v. 29; cf., v. 14). Generation’ (*genea*) can refer to one’s ‘contemporaries,’ all those living at a given time (cf. 8:12, 38; 9:19), or to a group of people descended from a common ancestor (cf. Matt. 23:36). Since the word ‘generation’ is capable of both a narrow and a broad sense, it is preferable in this context (cf. Mark 13:14) to understand in it a double reference incorporating both senses. Thus ‘this generation’ means: (a) the Jews living at Jesus’ time who later saw the destruction of Jerusalem, and (b) the Jews who will be living at the time of the Great Tribulation who will see the end-time events. This accounts best for the accomplishment of ‘all these things’ (cf. 11. 4b, 14-23)” (Grassmick, 172).

v. 32 *but about* Cf., “Now concerning” (HCSB). “The introductory ‘But concerning’ (*Peri de*) of 13:32 is best understood as signaling a switch to a new subject, as in 1 Cor. 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1;

16:1; 1 Thess. 4:9; 5:1)” (Stein, 621). While some commentators take “that day” to refer to the day of the Lord’s coming (see Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark*, TNTC, 337; Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Mark,” 2021 ed., 276, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/mark.pdf); Stein, 621), it more likely refers to “the day of the Lord” that includes the day of the Lord’s coming. “Rather, ‘that day or that hour’ looks at the day of the Lord itself—in a singular, comprehensive way. And this fits with Mark’s more general reference to ‘that time’ (13:33) or Luke’s that day’ (21:34) . . . Unlike the pattern that unfolds within the day of the Lord (in which the Son of Man’s coming on the clouds follows the distress caused by the abomination of desolation), the day of the Lord itself—as a comprehensive whole—will set into history without warning, without signs by which one can approximate its coming” (Craig Blaising, “A Case for Pretribulation Rapture,” in *Three Views on the Rapture*, 2nd ed., Counterpoints, 48; Grassmick, 172-73).

v. 32 *nor the Son* “This openly expressed limitation on Jesus’ knowledge affirms His humanity. In His Incarnation Jesus voluntarily accepted human limitations, including this one (cf. Acts 1:7), in submission to the Father’s will (cf. John 4:34). On the other hand Jesus’ use of ‘the Son’ title (only here in Mark) instead of the usual ‘Son of Man’ revealed His own awareness of His deity and sonship (cf. Mark 8:38). Nevertheless He exercised His divine attributes only at the Father’s bidding (cf. 5:30; John 8:28-29)” (Grassmick, 172).

v. 33 *Be on guard* “Because no one knows **when** (cf. v. 4a) **that time**, the appointed time of God’s intervention (‘that day,’ v. 32), **will come**, Jesus repeated His admonition, **Be on guard!** (*blepete*; cf. vv. 5, 9, 23) and added, **Be alert!** (*agrypneite*, ‘be constantly awake’)” (Grassmick, 173).

v. 34 *like* “The phrase like a man introduces a parable which reinforces the exhortation to watchfulness in verse 33, leading to a similar exhortation in verse 35” (Schnabel, 338)—the second parable in verses 28-37.

vv. 35, 37 *keep watch, watch* “Jesus widens his final exhortation Watch! (*grēgoreite*) from being addressed to you, the four disciples mentioned in verse 3, to all disciples and to everyone or ‘all’ (*pantes*), each and every one of his followers (cf. Luke 12:41)” (Schnabel, 339).



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

While Jesus' words regarding future events are certain, his disciples do not know "that day or hour," so they are to remain diligent and keep watch until he returns.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

By definition, to be ready means to be in a “suitable state for an activity, action, or situation.” In other words, to be fully prepared. When my middle son was in elementary school, I remember driving to a soccer game with his damp, pulled-from-the-dryer socks drying just a little more on the hot dashboard. Maybe I wasn’t quite prepared for that game. As a mom of four kids and a bonus teenager living under our roof, I try my very best to be on my “A Game” because I know that any other “game” is a fast-moving vortex of disaster that threatens to upend the entire home and shatter the relative peace we enjoy. I must know what’s ahead, what’s required to make that happen, and how to execute efficiently. I pay a lot of attention to being prepared for daily activities. However, this passage has me wondering how well we’ve done in preparing our family to be ready for Jesus’ return. We’ve had many, many conversations about character and how we spend our time throughout the years. This passage encourages me to revisit these conversations and go deeper considering the current age of our children. Are we growing in Christ? What are we spending our time doing? Are we loving God and loving others or wasting our time on frivolous nonsense? Do we have a sense of urgency for the lost? Honestly, I sometimes feel that Jesus’ return might be for another generation, but truthfully, who knows? Only God the Father. I pray God gives us a desire to humble ourselves and to live a life that reflects Jesus is returning.

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mark 13:28-37.

1. Who knows when Jesus will return?
2. What does Jesus tell us to do while we are waiting?
3. What is important about the servant watching the door?

### What Do You Think?

What does the fig tree have to do with this passage?

### What Do You Do?

What are some things you have to be ready for (school, practice)? How do you prepare?

## CORE COMPETENCY: Eternity

I believe in heaven and in hell and that one day Jesus will come again.

## MEMORY VERSE: Mark 13:33

*“Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.”*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week’s verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)  
*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)  
*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)  
*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)  
*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)  
*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)  
*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)  
*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)  
*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)  
*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)  
*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)  
*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)  
*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)  
*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)  
*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)  
*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)  
*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)  
*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)  
*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)  
*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)  
*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)  
*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)  
*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)  
*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)  
*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)  
*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)  
*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)  
*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)  
*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)  
*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)  
*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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