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Mark 13 (Part 1)



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg delves into a biblical exegesis of Mark 13, revealing that Jesus speaks mainly about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and Israel, along with the persecution of his disciples. The phrase "this generation" refers to the people living at the time, rather than a future generation, and the sign of the approaching destruction would be the surrounding of Jerusalem by pagan armies or the abomination of desolation. Gregg highlights the importance of accurately interpreting past biblical prophecies and avoiding reading personal interpretations into the passage.

Transcript

In Mark 13, we have the Olivet Discourse, so-called because Jesus spoke it on the Mount of Olives. Olivet means pertaining to olives. It's the discourse of Jesus that he gave to a few of his disciples privately.

It is the only one of the long discourses of Jesus that Mark's Gospel records. In Matthew, we have five long discourses recorded, and those discourses in Matthew are perhaps made a little bit longer by the inclusion of other material, as Matthew tends to gather things together in a topical manner. But it would appear that there were times when Jesus spoke at length to his disciples or to a more public setting.

Actually, the long discourses in the Gospel of Matthew are almost entirely given to the disciples, and they are almost entirely omitted in Mark's Gospel, except in some cases, the information in those discourses is divvied up and sectioned out to different smaller portions. But Mark, who has not given us very much in the way of long discourses of Jesus at all, makes an exception in this case, perhaps because this discourse is the most detailed and the most precise prophecy that Jesus may have given. We know that Jesus, on three occasions prior to this, had predicted his own death, his own resurrection three days later.

That's pretty precise also, but that's a really single event that he predicted, whereas in the Olivet Discourse, he predicts a large number of events, and he does something that most prophets do not do in the Old Testament prophecy. He puts a time limit on it. He

states when it will be fulfilled as well as what is going to happen.

Now, I'd like to read this discourse. It's a little bit shorter in Mark than it is in Matthew, but it's still fairly lengthy. It still occupies the whole chapter.

I'd like to read the whole thing and then go back and talk to you about its meaning. In Mark chapter 13, the parallels are in Matthew 24 and in Luke 21. 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.

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, as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when will these things be and what will be the sign when these things will be fulfilled? And Jesus answered them, answering them, began to say, Take heed that no one deceives you, for many will come in my name saying I am he and will deceive many. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled, for such things must happen.

But the end is not yet. 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. But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils and you will be beaten in their synagogues. And you'll be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for testimony to them.

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

Now, brother will betray brother to death and a father, his child and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all men for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

But 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 and let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house nor enter to take anything out of the house and let him who is in the field not go back to get his garment.

But woe to those who are pregnant and those nursing babies in those days and pray that your flight may not be in the winter. For in those days there will be tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of 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, whom he chose, he shortened those days. Then if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ or look, he is there. Do not believe it for false Christ and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

But take heed. See, I have told you all things beforehand. But in those days after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.

The stars of heaven will fall in the powers of the heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory. 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.

Now, learn this parable from the fig tree, which is when its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves. You know that summer is near. So you also when you see these things happening, know that it is near at the very doors.

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour, no one knows neither the angels in heaven nor the sun, but only the father.

Take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country who left his house and gave authority to his service and to each his work and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 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.

Last coming suddenly, he finds you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all watch. All right.

Well, of course, not only is this the one discourse that's found in all three of the synoptic gospels, but it's also a very familiar discourse and partly due to the fact that it is the subject of sermons. Frequently in our time, because of its apparent or at least supposed application to our own times. There are many preachers and authors who would say that this is talking about the end of the world, the second coming of Christ, and that we are living perhaps in those times.

And so this suggestion, this assumption actually has occasioned a lot of special interest in this passage, because you read about earthquakes, for example, and we look at the newspapers and there's many earthquakes today. We find out there are natural disasters, pestilences, famines. And we do find such things in the news these days, a lot wars and rumors of wars, plenty of wars, false messiahs, false prophets.

Yeah, we've got those two. All the things that are listed here can be found in our own day and our own age. And that encourages many people to feel that perhaps we are

living in the time that Jesus is describing and therefore that we can expect the end.

Soon, perhaps that is, of course, the popular view. And by popular, I mean popular at this present time, in this present spot, because throughout history, that was not really the view of this. And it has not always been the view of the church that this is talking about the end of the world.

You can find extensive commentaries on this passage from the older commentators to three, four hundred years ago, and they did not apply this to the end of the world. And there was a good reason they did not. It became popular to see it as a prophecy of the end of the world, pretty much with the rise of the dispensational system and the emphasis on end times.

The futurist view of the book of Revelation coming into vogue in the Protestant circles. It had originated in Catholic circles in the 16th century and had been rejected by Protestants until the early 1800s. But the idea that came into Protestant circles in the early 19th century that the book of Revelation is about the end of the world.

And it's obvious that this passage has many things in common with the contents of the book of Revelation. In fact, it's a point of interest to me, at least, that John's gospel is the only gospel that does not include this discourse. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, since there's very little overlap between the material in John and the material in the Synoptics.

But it has been pointed out that John perhaps had already written his version of this in the book of Revelation. Which is not to say that Revelation is really John's version of the all of the discourse, but rather that having received that revelation on Patmos and knowing that it covered the same ground that this discourse covered. John did not see any reason to include this discourse as well in his gospel, though the other writers did.

It's a reasonable theory. It's only a theory. But it does seem very likely that the book of Revelation and this discourse are about the same subject, whatever that subject may be.

And on the view that both Revelation and this passage are about the end times, many have concluded that the disasters described here are things that will take place in the Great Tribulation. There is reference to tribulation here in verse 19, for in those days there will be tribulation. In the parallel to that statement in Matthew 24, 21, Jesus says there shall be great tribulation.

And hence we have the expression, the Great Tribulation. Great Tribulation comes from Matthew 24, 21, which is parallel to this statement here in verse 19. Also, the book of Revelation talks about the Great Tribulation.

In Revelation 7, in verse 14, John sees an innumerable company of souls in heaven worshipping God, and he is told that these are those who are coming up out of the Great

Tribulation. So twice we read of the Great Tribulation in the Bible, once in the all of the discourse, Matthew 24, 21, and once in Revelation 7, 14. Another reason to believe that the two are about the same subject matter.

Also, we have in this discourse a prediction in verse 14 of the abomination of desolation. Jesus says, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet. Now, many people believe that the abomination of desolation is something that is like the abomination of desolation that happened in 186 BC.

When Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig and desecrated the temple in Jerusalem. That is referred to in Daniel chapter 11 as an abomination of desolation or an abomination that makes desolate. It's an abomination to God, and it made the temple desolate.

You see, in 186 or 168 BC, the pagan ruler, the Syrian overlord of Israel, Antiochus Epiphanes, broke into the temple in Jerusalem. He sacrificed a pig on an altar to Zeus there, and that desecrated the temple. As far as the Jews were concerned, they didn't use it again for three more years until it could be cleansed.

And they had driven the oppressors out in the Maccabean Revolt. But Daniel had predicted that in Daniel 11 and said that event would be called an abomination of desolation. However, Daniel had also spoken of another event called an abomination of desolation in Daniel chapter 9. An event that would happen after the time of the Messiah, because in Daniel chapter 9, verses 24 through 27, we have the prophecy of the so-called 70 weeks or the 77.

I won't go into that in great detail, but suffice it to say that in that prophecy, Daniel told us that the Messiah would be cut off or killed. And it says, and the people of the prince who is to come shall come and destroy the city and the sanctuary, Jerusalem in the temple. And then in Daniel 9, 27, actually, the next verse, it says, on the wing of abominations shall be one that makes desolate an abomination that makes desolate.

Now, that is not talking about the sacrifice of a soul in the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, which was referred to by the same expression in Daniel 11. But in Daniel 9, he's talked of the Messiah coming and dying and the temple and Jerusalem being destroyed. And then we read of the abomination of desolation.

So there is another abomination of desolation after that spoken by Antiochus Epiphanes actions, because Antiochus did that almost 200 years before Christ. But now Christ himself predicts a future abomination of desolation after his own time. Clearly, there are two abominations that cause desolation.

And many people assume that the second one is the same kind of thing as the first one. What was the first one? Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig, he desecrated the temple. Many people believe the abomination of desolation that Jesus predicted will be fulfilled in

our future, in the middle of the tribulation, that the Jews will have rebuilt their temple there in Jerusalem.

And that an Antichrist, who will at this time have reached the zenith of power as a world dictator, will place an image of himself in that temple and demand that people worship him as a god. And in so doing, he's doing something very parallel to what Antiochus Epiphanes did. He puts an image, a pagan symbol in the temple in Jerusalem and requires worship there.

That is at least what many people think Jesus is referring to. Obviously, that has not happened. And so the assumption is that must be in the future.

We also have this verse of 24 and following in those days after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened. The moon will not give its light. The stars of heaven will fall and the powers in heaven will be shaken.

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send his angels and gather together his elect from the four winds from the farthest part of heaven to the farthest of earth to the farthest part of heaven. Now, here we have wording that sounds like it must be the end of the world.

We've got stars falling from the sky. We've got the sun and the moon being darkened. Not only the end of the world, but the end of the cosmos as we know it.

And Jesus coming. Therefore, there are a number of things in this passage that encourage people to believe this is talking about the end of the world. We've got we've got the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, the end of the cosmos.

We've got this abomination of desolation, which, if it is, in fact, an Antichrist setting up his image in the temple in Jerusalem, has not yet happened. And we have many other things here of which it is said, you know, these things are more true now than ever. The earthquakes.

I remember hearing recently that there have been more earthquakes in the last century. Or maybe I actually think I heard that in the last 10 years, there's been more earthquakes than in all of recorded history previously. And since Jesus said there'll be earthquakes in diverse places, that to many people points toward the fulfillment of these prophecies.

Now, that all of that what I just described is. The popular view. And many people feel quite convinced that is true and depend very largely on what I would call newspaper exegesis.

That is, they're exegeting the passages based on what the newspapers say. Compare compare the predictions with the newspapers. Many famous preachers, even Billy

Graham, whom I greatly admire and love, has said, you know, when you read the book of Revelation, when you read all of this course and you look in the newspapers, it looks like you're reading the same thing.

And therefore, that means the newspapers confirm that we're living in the times spoken of here. That's what I call newspaper exegesis. Now, actually, I believe that biblical exegesis should be done on a different basis than that.

I think, for example, we should believe the words in the passage. And there are a lot of words in the passage that tell us that this is not talking about a time that is still future from our point of view. And we can see that simply by really exegeting the passage.

Now, exegesis, the word I've been using here, actually is a word that means to draw out or to read out of the passage, its actual statements, its own meaning. There's another word called exegesis or exegesis, which means to read into a passage ideas that are not found in it. Ex, exegesis, ex is a Greek word that means out of, eis, e-i-s, eis really, is a Greek word that means into.

So exegesis or exegesis, as it's more commonly referred to, is reading into the passage, something that you already think is supposed to be there. And reading it through a grid, you already know what you expect to find. And so you read it into what you're seeing there.

But exegesis is to read out of the passage. And I believe in exegesis, not exegesis. So, you know, it's true.

I was raised like everybody else with the belief that this is talking about the end of the world, the Great Tribulation, the second coming of Christ and all of that. So I used to read the passage and I used to exegete it that way, too. I'd read those thoughts.

And, for example, I just said to you that the futurist view of this holds that the abomination of desolation is the Antichrist setting up an image of himself in the temple. I never had any serious doubts about that for the first eight or more years of my teaching ministry. I was told that it was that.

And every time I read abomination of desolation, I read that picture of Antichrist setting up his image in the temple. I read that right into it. But as you may have noticed, or you will if you look at it again closely, there's no mention of an Antichrist in this entire passage.

There's not any reference to a holy of holies or a temple being intruded into by an Antichrist. Where does that idea come from? Well, it actually comes from two passages elsewhere, which I think are both misunderstood. And they're both applied, as it were, to the same thing, although their passage is about two different things.

And by trying to combine them and read them into the passage, people get a future intrusion into the temple of Jerusalem by a future Antichrist. But it's not here in the passage. Let's see what is in the passage.

When we get to that passage about the abomination of desolation, I'll tell you what those two passages are that they use to try to read into it. But let's see what it actually says. Jesus, remember, I told you in one of our early lectures that in the Passion Week, Jesus spoke primarily about one subject, not his death or resurrection, although those were imminent.

But he spoke about the judgment that would come upon Jerusalem and Israel because, well, because of his death. In fact, although Mark doesn't record this particular thing in Matthew, or excuse me, Luke chapter 19, as Jesus is approaching Jerusalem before his triumphal entry at the beginning of the Passion Week. We read this in Luke 19 and verse 41.

As he drew near, Jesus saw the city and wept over it. City of Jerusalem. He wept, saying, if you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace.

But now they are hidden from your eyes, for the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side and level you and your children within you to the ground. And they will not leave in you one stone upon another because you did not know the time of your visitation. Sounds like the same prediction, doesn't it? It's a different time, but same prediction.

This is at the beginning of the Passion Week. Right after the triumphal entry, he makes this prediction. He weeps over the city.

And so right at the beginning of the Passion Week, he makes a specific prediction that Jerusalem is going to be destroyed and not one stone to be left on another. Because why? Because they didn't recognize him. They didn't recognize the Messiah.

In fact, they not only didn't recognize him, they killed him. This was their greatest mistake in their history of a history filled with many mistakes, killing their prophets, worshipping idols and doing other horrible things. But this was the greatest of their sins.

And it was going to be the occasion of the end of Jerusalem. This he announced the very first day he wrote into Jerusalem. But then, of course, that same the next day, he cursed the fig tree as he was walking into Jerusalem.

And the next day it was seen to be withered up from the roots. And virtually every evangelical I know of believes that is a symbol of Israel being cursed and withered. And then we have certain things Jesus taught, like the story of the vineyard and the vine dressers who killed the servants that were sent and killed the owner's son.

And then the owner said, well, what's going to happen to those people? And the listeners actually said to Jesus, well, the owner is going to kill those people. He's going to destroy those miserable men and give the vineyard to someone else. And that is true.

Of course, it was a prediction that God would judge Israel because they killed his son. He would destroy the vineyard and the vine dressers. He's not going to destroy the vineyard, he's going to give the vineyard to someone else.

Although Mark doesn't record it, Matthew records it on the heels of that parable. Another one like it about a wedding feast. A king who makes a wedding for his son, he invites his friends.

That would be the Jews. They make excuses and don't come. They don't come and become part of the Messiah's kingdom.

And so the king is angry and sends out his armies and destroys them and burns up their city. That's in Matthew 22. I think it's verse 7 or 8 that talks about that, him sending his armies and destroying their city.

So we have Jesus making many references to the destruction of Jerusalem. And he makes one at the beginning of this chapter also. In Mark chapter 13, the disciples of Jesus are impressed with the stones of the temple.

And while they might be from what Josephus says and others, this temple was made of huge stones that were perfectly carved, so perfectly carved, in fact, their surfaces were so smooth that there was no need to use mortar between them. A wisp of air could not get between the stones because they were perfectly hewn and enormous. It was one of the seven wonders of the world was the Jewish temple in those days.

And the disciples, as they leave the temple with Jesus, they're marveling at these stones. They look at these Jesus and Jesus, yeah, you see that you'd be surprised. These are all going to be thrown down.

And that's the prediction he makes. In verse 2, not one stone should be left upon another that shall not be thrown down. That's the same prediction we read a moment ago in Luke chapter 19 on a different occasion, a week or four or five days earlier.

The destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred, of course, when the Romans destroyed it, which happened as the result of a protracted war between the Jews and Rome, a war that began in the year 66 AD, just 36 years after Jesus said this, when the zealot party rebelled against Rome and the Romans sent a retaliatory force in and that began the Jewish war. That war continued for about three and a half years, from 66 AD, until Jerusalem had been besieged and was breached and the Romans came in and they destroyed the city. And that was the end in AD 70.

And they dismantled the temple and tore it down, tore its stones down. So, and Jesus predicted that that would happen. That's what he predicts.

Not one stone to be left on another. Now, some people say, no, this has to happen in the future because there still are some stones standing on top of each other. Haven't you ever seen the Wailing Wall? I have.

I've been there. I've seen the Wailing Wall. Big stone wall.

And they say, isn't that part of the temple? No, it isn't part of the temple. The Wailing Wall never was part of the temple. The Wailing Wall is a retaining wall.

It's holding up earth to create the temple mound. The temple was up on that mound somewhere on the dirt, but the wall is like a retaining wall, like you'd have if you're landscaping. You want to make terraces out of a sloped surface.

You have to put retaining walls up to make flat surfaces. The Wailing Wall that is still standing is not a wall of the temple. It is not part of the temple at all.

It is just a landscaping structural feature to hold up earth so that there could be a temple built on the earth. Now, not one stone is left standing on another. You go there now, you have to find one temple stone upon another one.

The temple stones are gone. In fact, at a later date, another Roman actually plowed Jerusalem with a plow, just like Micah, the prophet, said would happen. And all the stones were removed from the area.

Now, this happened in A.D. 70. Jesus predicted it would happen, but he had not given anything about the time frame. So the disciples came to him, and only Mark tells us which disciples.

In Matthew 24, 3 and in the parallel in Luke 21, it says the disciples came to Jesus. But here it says four of the disciples, the regular three that we call the inner circle, Peter, James and John. And on this occasion, Peter's brother Andrew joined them, too.

But they came to Jesus and asked him privately. That means the other disciples didn't even hear the question or the answer. This discourse was given to these four men, and they asked two questions.

They said, tell us, when will these things be? And the other question was, and what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled? Now, both questions have as their subject, what these things. When will these things be and what sign will there be that these things will be fulfilled? Or, as it says in Luke's version, that these things are about to come to pass. One question is asking about a time frame.

The other is asking about a sign. Will there be any sign to let us know that the time is

imminent? Will there be any warning in other words? Now, both of the questions are about what they call these things. Now, these things obviously have got to have some kind of antecedent.

They're talking about the prediction that Jesus made. And what did he predict? He predicted the destruction of the temple, which is part of the destruction of the whole city of Jerusalem by the Romans. So we know when it happened from history.

They didn't know because they hadn't happened yet. We can look back and we know when it happened. Jesus prediction was fulfilled in AD 70.

That's when these things happened. Now, the disciples asked him when they would happen. And would there be any sign that those things were about to happen? And in the discourse that follows, we would expect Jesus to address that subject, since that's what they asked.

And he answers both questions, actually. The first question they asked was, when will these things be? When will the temple be destroyed? And he answered that question in verse 30. He said, Surely I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away until all these things, the same things, presumably.

These things that they asked about, the destruction of the temple, take place. So he gives them a very direct answer to their question. When will these things be? And the answer is, well, they'll happen within this generation.

That's about as close to an estimate as I can give you. But at least you know that it will not be 100 or 200 or 300 years from now, because some of those standing here are still going to be here. This generation will not pass until all these things happen.

Now, I want to say about that verse 30, that it's definitely a problem to those who want to say that this chapter is to be fulfilled in the end of the world. Because quite obviously, the disciples are dead now. Their whole generation that they lived in is dead.

And therefore, he can't really be talking about something that has not yet happened. He has to be predicting something that happened while that generation was living. So what do people do with this verse when they want to say, no, this is about a future tribulation time? Well, they say that there's a couple of things.

There's two different ways they go with this. One is they say that this generation means this race of people. And the reason is because the word generation, the Greek is *genea*.

It can mean a family. It can mean a race. It can mean all the people living at the same time, like we talk about.

My generation is the people who are living in the same general time that I'm living. My

contemporaries. Now, if you look this up in a concordance or not a concordance, but in a lexicon, you'll find that the word *genea*, its primary meaning is all those living at a given time.

A group of contemporaries. That's the way we use the word generation in our language, too. But you'll find the lexicon also has additional meanings.

And that includes a race or a family of people. Those who are generated from from one source, like, you know, from an ancestor. So generation, the word itself can mean a race, although its primary meaning is more like what we mean by generation.

And so those who say, well, this didn't happen in the first century in their generation, it's going to happen in the future. They say he didn't mean to say it would happen in their lifetime during their generation. Like we think of that word.

He really meant this race. The Jewish race would not pass away before all these things are fulfilled. Well, there's a couple or three reasons why I don't think this is a very good suggestion.

One is. That that is not the primary meaning of the word *genea*. But another is that if Jesus said this race will not pass away.

Rather than this generation will not pass away. Then he avoided the question altogether. A question that actually had an easy answer.

An answer that we now know the answer in retrospect. All he predicted in this was the destruction of Jerusalem. He didn't predict the end of the world.

He predicted the destruction of the temple, not one stone to be left standing. That's what they asked him about. Did it happen in that generation? It did exactly 40 years after he predicted it.

That was in that generation. So if he said this generation will not pass, then he answered their question. Something that we might expect him to do since they asked and he gave a long protracted response.

If, on the other hand, he said this race will never will not pass away until these things fulfilled. That doesn't tell us anything about timing. And therefore, he avoided their questions, told them nothing about when it's going to happen.

In fact, he answered a question they had no curiosity about. Is the Jewish race going to pass away before this happens? They hadn't asked anything about that. There was no there wasn't even a reference to the Jewish race in his in his statement.

He's not talking about the race of the Jews in this passage. He's talking about the destruction of a building and for him to say this race will not pass away. That might be a

very interesting statement that has nothing to do with anything that he's predicted here or that they've asked him about.

And if and if he did not say this generation, then he has not answered their question. But if he did say this generation will not pass, then he did answer a question and he answered it correctly. In fact, it seems to me like Christians should be eager to insist that he answered it correctly, because it is one of the most remarkable prophecies that has been fulfilled.

And Christians like fulfilled prophecy. Christians like to point out that the prophets and Jesus could predict the future. And that came to pass.

It's one of the proofs that they are who they claim to be. But but modern Christians, they don't want it to be true. They don't want him to predict it correctly that it happened in that generation.

They want it to be futuristic. Why? Why do they want that? I can't think of any reason to want it. It's just what they've been told.

And it's what they know. It's their story. They stick with it.

But it wasn't. It's not necessarily the best interpretation of the passage. Now, the other thing they do sometimes when they want to make this passage fulfilled in the future is they say, well, it's not the race of the Jews.

And many dispensations, for example, acknowledge it. It's not likely that he's talking about the race. This race will not pass away.

But rather that he means the generation that sees the sign that he is described, the nation rising against nation, the kingdom against kingdom, the earthquake, the famine, the abomination of desolation, or more importantly to them, the founding of the nation of Israel. Well, where do you get that in the passage? Well, they get that out of the verse 28 from the parable of the fig tree. They said the fig tree represents Israel.

And when its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So they say he's predicting that the fig tree of Israel is going to reemerge after a long period of dormancy. After 70 AD, Israel kind of went into exile into the diaspora.

And but they've come back in 1948. They've come back into existence again. The fig tree is putting forth its fresh twigs and branches and leaves.

And they say that what Jesus is saying is the generation that sees that happen. We'll see the end of everything. And based on that interpretation, the teaching I used to sit under and, of course, the teaching of people like how Lindsay was that when Israel became a

nation in 1948, that was the blossoming of the fig tree.

And the generation that saw that will see the second coming of Christ. Now, since the generation generally in the Bible is thought to be about 40 years, they it was actually predicted by some that Jesus had to come back by the year 1988. Because Israel became a nation in 1948, 40 years later, 1988, Jesus has come back.

And since many of these people believe that the rapture has happened seven years earlier than the second coming, many predicted the rapture would happen in 1981. Books were written, people got ready, ran up their credit cards and so forth. And then it didn't happen.

They had to pay their credit cards off. But, you know, they could have been. They didn't have to make that mistake if they pay attention.

Jesus didn't say that generation will not pass as if he's talking about some future generation. He said this generation will not pass. And the expression this generation is one that Jesus used at least five times in his ministry that we know of.

And in all the other times he was speaking about his contemporaries. For example, he said to what shall I like in this generation? They're like children playing in the street saying we pipe and you didn't mourn. We played a tune and you didn't dance.

He says, because you heard John the Baptist and you said he has a demon. You heard me and you say I'm old friend of sinners. Who's this generation? The people who are John the Baptist and Jesus, his own generation.

And similarly said the Queen of Sheba will rise up in judgment as will the men of Nineveh against this generation. Why? Because they came from afar to the Queen of Sheba came from far to hear the wisdom of Solomon and Nineveh repented of the preaching of Jonah. But this generation, they have one better than Solomon here.

He means himself. This generation is the generation that Jesus is living in. Who heard him? Who heard John the Baptist? His own generation.

It's not that generation. Sometimes thousands of years later than his time. You see the expression this generation is one that occurs at least five times in the teaching of Jesus.

This is the final time in the record. And there's every reason to believe it means the same thing here. His own generation.

It's the natural meaning of the word. This generation does not mean that other generation sometime in the future. What's more, Jesus made the same prediction essentially.

In another place, in words that cannot be easily mistaken. In Matthew chapter 16 in

Matthew chapter 16 verse 28. Jesus said, and there's a parallel in Mark, but it's worded a little differently.

But in Matthew 16, 28, I surely I say to you, Jesus said, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Well, in Mark 13, he predicted you will see the Son of Man coming. Mark 13, 26 is, then they will see the Son of Man coming.

Well, Jesus said elsewhere, some of you standing here won't taste death before you see that. But here he says this generation will not pass before you see that. Isn't that the same information really? To say some people who are living now will not die is the same thing as saying this generation will not pass.

But you see, in Matthew 16, the statement is less ambiguous. He can't be talking about some future generation in the, you know, that generation, because he says some of you standing here right now won't die before you see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. So, you know, this generation, when you compare it with other things Jesus said, when he used the term this generation or the equivalent statement, some of you standing here will not taste death.

It always points to his own generation. And once again, if he was talking about some future generation that might not emerge until thousands of years after his time. He is not answering his disciples question said, when will this be? And again, we know when it was because he predicted it and it has happened.

It happened in a.D. 70 and he said this generation won't pass. Why not just take it in its obvious meaning? Why not recognize that this is one of the most remarkable fulfilled prophecies because Jesus predicted it and then it happened in the time, right? Exactly in the time frame that he said it would be. It's a it's a marvelous fulfilled prophecy, certainly proves Jesus to be who he claims to be, unless we take it to mean something else that doesn't prove anything yet because it hasn't been fulfilled yet now.

So my contention is that Jesus answered the first question, when should these things be the answers in this generation? But the other question is, what sign will there be that these things are about to take place? In other words, OK, even if you tell me it's going to happen sometime in this generation, I still want to be ready because it looks like this is going to be a disaster. Is there any warning I'll have like just before it happens? Is there anything to tip me off? Is there a sign you can give me that these things will be about to take place again? These things are the same, these things, the destruction of Jerusalem. And he does answer that question, too.

And that brings us, of course, to Mark 13, 14. 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. That's your sign. You want to have a sign that you've got to get out of town.

You got to want to find that these things are about to happen. This is it. When you see the abomination of desolation.

Now, Matthew's version also says that in Matthew 24, 15. Matthew 24, 15 says, when you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, then you who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Both Mark and Matthew is the same language, the abomination of desolation.

But they both, Matthew and Mark, both include in parentheses the statement, let the reader understand. Why do they say that? Well, no doubt they said it because it's not easy to understand and they want to make sure their reader gets it. What's not easy to understand? Well, the expression abomination of desolation is not exactly a household word.

I mean, it is if you've been reading how Lindsay in your house, but in most people's houses, it's not a well-known expression. Abomination of desolation. What's it mean? And both Matthew and Mark don't tell us what it means, but they say, I hope you understand what this is referring to.

Well, Luke, who's writing to a Greek who would not in any sense be expected to understand in Luke's parallel. He does not trust his reader to understand. And so he tells him what it means.

And Luke chapter 21 is the parallel. And Luke tells us what the abomination of desolation means in Luke chapter 21 and verse 20. This is I mean, you can go through Luke 21 and Mark 13 verse by verse and see that this is the exact parallel to the statement about the abomination of desolation.

It says in Luke 21 20, but when you see not the abomination of desolation, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that it's desolation is near Jerusalem. Surrounded by the pagan armies is the abomination and it is the abomination is going to bring the desolation, which is near at that time. Then verse 21, let those in Judea flee to the mountains.

Let those who are in the midst of her depart, etc. In other words, it's the same prediction, only it's explained. We would say it's a paraphrase.

Jesus actual words are given in Mark and Matthew. When you see the abomination of desolation, Luke doesn't expect Theophilus, a Greek living in some other part of the world to understand the Hebrew expression abomination desolation. So we just kind of paraphrase that makes it easy.

What it means, Luke says, is when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, would his disciples live to see that? Well, some in their generation certainly would. And he says, that is how you will know that the desolation is near. You want some forewarning.

There will be forwarding when you see the Roman armies coming now. And they just leave when you see that get out. Now, there is I've heard various historical information about what actually happened.

But the story, as I understand it today, is that the Jewish war between Rome and Israel from 66 to 70 AD was fought largely with a Vespasian as the Roman general. He conducted the war in Palestine as the leader of the Roman armies, Vespasian did. But a crisis happened in the midst of the war back in Rome.

While Vespasian was in Palestine, the Caesar, who happened to be Nero, committed suicide in 68 AD. And after that, there was an upheaval in Rome because there was no natural successor to the emperor. And so there were contenders and all of Rome was thrown into a civil conflict where various generals and other people who wanted to be the emperor were leading those troops that were loyal to them against others.

There's this big civil war going on in Rome, and one guy would position himself as the emperor and he'd rule for three months and another guy would assassinate him and he'd become ruler for a few months. And then he'd got thrown out. There were Galba, Vitellus and Otho are three guys who in a single year or 18 months anyway, succeeded one another rapidly by assassinating each other on the throne as the replacements, the desired replacements of Nero.

Finally, the problems in Rome were solved when the Senate elected Vespasian to be the new emperor, but he was leading the troops against Israel in Palestine. And when he heard that he was to be the next emperor, he left there, of course, why stay in the trenches when you're going to go to the palace? And he withdrew from Jerusalem, as I understand it, he had besieged Jerusalem, but then he withdrew everything to go back to Rome. And once he was established as emperor there, he sent his son Titus at the head of the Roman armies back to Jerusalem.

They besieged the city and eventually destroyed it. That means there was a window of opportunity from the first time that Jerusalem was surrounded by armies by Vespasian. And then he withdrew and then Titus came back and started again and no one got out alive after that.

But in the window of opportunity between the Christians in Jerusalem fled. They fled across the Jordan, they fled to a town called Pella, and they were safe. And so when Titus came back and destroyed the city, the Christians had all escaped, as Jesus had warned them to do.

When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know it's desolation to you, then you who are in duty flee, Jesus had told him, and they did. And so the Christians from Jerusalem survived that Holocaust and very few others really did and remained free men. So the second question was, what sign will there be, Jesus said, when you see the abomination of desolation, which we have it on Luke's authority, that means the siege of Jerusalem.

When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, that did happen in that generation, too. And it was the warning. Now, there couldn't be anything more perfect about this prophecy.

The disciples asked him two questions about the timing and the forewarning that would come before the destruction of Jerusalem that he had predicted. He answers both questions. The timing is in this generation.

The forewarning is you'll see Jerusalem surrounded by armies or the abomination of desolation. I told you, I would tell you why some believe the abomination of desolation is future Antichrist setting up his image in the future temple in Jerusalem. The reason is because they believe that because the founder of dispensationism said that.

Now, what scriptures did he use to support that to one of them is in second Thessalonians chapter two and second Thessalonians chapter two. We are introduced to a figure that Paul refers to as the man of lawlessness or the son of perdition. And many well, this sensation, they apply this passage to a future political ruler that they call the Antichrist.

And it says about him who is called the son of perdition, the man of sin in verse three in verse four, says, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped so that he sits as God in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. So this is where they get that idea. The man of lawlessness Antichrist going to sit in the temple of God making himself God.

We've got that and then the other passage they use and there are only two. The other passage is in Revelation chapter 13 and there we read about a beast that rises out of the sea and another beast that rises out of the land. The beast that rises out of the sea is apparently a political ruler.

The one who rises out of the land represents a religious ruler or system. But the second beast is very loyal to the first piece and actually we're told that he the second piece of verse 15 Revelation 13:15. He was granted power to give breath to the image.

I got a verse earlier verse 14. He the second beast deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the side of the beast telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword

and live. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast and that the image of the beast should both speak and cause many as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

Now that's what we have there. We have a second piece making an image of the first piece and require one to worship. Now the dispensational idea of the abomination of desolation is that there's an image of the beast or image of the Antichrist put in the temple of Jerusalem, but you may know there's no passage is visiting remotely like that in Revelation 13.

It says there's an image of the beast. Whoever the beast is, but that image is never said to be in Jerusalem or in a temple or anything like that. It's just an image that made in everyone in the world is told to worship it.

Nebuchadnezzar made an image in Daniel chapter 3 and required to worship it, but it wasn't in Jerusalem or in a temple even. There's certainly no reason to believe that an image that is worshipped has to be in Jerusalem or has to be in a temple. There's no reference anywhere to an image of the Antichrist input into a Jerusalem temple, but what we have in second Thessalonians.

We saw is the man of sin himself in the temple of God. Now that's not the same thing as having an image of himself. I'd like to suggest you that the man of sin or the man of lawlessness in second Thessalonians 2 is not the same as the beast in Revelation 13.

There's no reason in the world to equate them. The beast in Revelation 13 is described as a political entity. The man of lawlessness is described as a religious entity setting himself as if he is God himself.

Not an image of himself himself sitting in the temple of God. There's no image here. These two passages are somehow artificially synthesized into a doctrine that the Antichrist who is thought to be both the beast and the man of sin.

The man of lawlessness will put an image of himself in the temple. One passage mentions an image, but no temple. The other passage mentions a temple, but no image.

But what's more, there's not a reference anywhere here about the Jerusalem temple, because Paul says the man of sin will sit in the temple of God. Paul never uses that expression for the Jewish temple, but he does use it more than once of another temple. And in first Corinthians chapter three and first Corinthians six, both and second Corinthians six, three times, Paul refers to the church as the temple.

For example, in first Corinthians three, Paul writes to the church of Corinth in verse sixteen. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the spirit of God dwells in you? OK, so the church is the temple of God, according to Paul in first Corinthians chapter six, first Corinthians six, nineteen, Paul says, or do you not know that

your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? And then in second Corinthians chapter six, verse sixteen, again, says, And what agreement has the temple of God with idols for you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, the temple of God, Paul says, is you.

He said it in first Corinthians three, sixteen. He said it in second Corinthians six, sixteen. He used the exact expression, temple of God.

It's the church as far as Paul is concerned. And he says that the man of lawlessness will sit in the temple of God. A term that Paul never uses for the Jewish temple, but does use.

There's at least two different precedents for his use of it of the church. It's the only thing he ever referred to as the temple of God in his writings. So it's better to suppose that the man of lawlessness sits in the church or is positioned in the church as a false leader there.

We will not speculate right now who the man of lawlessness may be or might have been. Nor who the beast is. Those are interesting questions, but they are not mentioned.

Neither the beast nor the man of lawlessness is mentioned in the all of the discourse. So there's no reason for us to go too long there. I only show you those passages to show the kind of eisegesis that people use in reading Matthew 24 and Mark 13 and Luke 21 and trying to make the abomination of desolation be an image of Antichrist put into a rebuilt Jewish temple.

There's no place in the New Testament speaks about a rebuilt Jewish temple. There's no place that speaks of an image of Antichrist put into any temple. There is reference to a bad person sitting himself in a temple of God, but that's Paul's reference to the church, not the Jewish temple.

There's really nothing there. There's nothing there. So what is there? There is what Jesus actually said.

This generation will not pass before these things happen. When you disciples, when you the four of you, I'm talking to you, any of you that may still be alive at the time when you see the abomination of desolation or as Luke puts it, when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, get out of town. Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple.

He was asked when it would be and what sign there would be that was about to happen. And he was and he told them. Now, what do you do with the rest of the passage? The reference to wars and rumors of wars and false messiahs and false prophets and pestilences and earthquakes and diverse places and all that stuff.

There's a lot of that in this passage. And there was a lot of that in the world in the first century, as there is now and has been at every age ever since. But the point that Jesus is making is you're going to find that these earthquakes and pestilences and wars are

happening.

You think it's the end. It's the end. He says, No, it's not the end yet.

That's just the beginning of the birth pain. I find it interesting. In Mark 13, eight, the last line when Jesus talks about all these disasters happening on the earth, he says, this is just the beginning of it says sorrows in the New King James.

The Greek word is birth pains like labor pains. A baby is about to be born. This is not the end of the world.

That'd be the death rattle in the throat, not the birth pains of a new baby. Something is being born here. It's being born out of.

The old Jerusalem, and that is the remnant who come forth, who are the followers of Christ. The Jewish church, it is coming into its own before the Jerusalem is destroyed. The Jewish church was in Jerusalem, worshiping in the temple and basically saw itself as a branch of Judaism, not as something really new.

They saw themselves as Messianic, Messianic Jews. They still kept the law. They went to the temple.

They offered sacrifices. They kept Sabbath. They did all those things.

But they also had the Messiah, just like the modern Messianic think about themselves. In fact, not only did the Jewish Christians think that way about themselves, but they actually the world thought that about them to the Romans thought that Christians were just another branch of Judaism. One of the Roman historians tells us that when Titus destroyed Jerusalem, he thought he was destroying Judaism and Christianity in one blow.

Because he thought that Christianity and Judaism were joined at the hip, that they were two branches of the same thing. And once that temple goes down, we get rid of both of those pestilent religions, Judaism and Christianity. But he was wrong because Christianity isn't Judaism.

Christianity is something new. It's a new baby. And this birth pangs that created the church as a separate entity from Jerusalem.

Now, the church had already been around for 40 years at that time, but it had not really cut the umbilical cord yet from the temple and from from Judaism. But it's interesting that in Isaiah chapter 66 and verse eight, it says, Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? As soon as Zion prevailed, Zion is Jerusalem. She gave birth to her children.

Now, this passage is talking about the birth of the new covenant community out of the

old covenant. Zion goes through its birth pangs and it gives birth to a new movement, the Christian movement. Jesus referred to these disasters as not the end of the world.

They are the first birth pangs of something new that's coming. It's not the end. Jesus predicted that his disciples be persecuted.

That did happen. All the things that Jesus said would happen did happen. And if you would like to read the commentaries that talk about this, they often will list all the places in the Roman and Jewish records of the time that point out that there were famines all over the world at this time.

There were earthquakes all over the world at this time. There were false messiahs. We see those even in the Book of Acts.

Paul and his companions had to face false messiahs. Peter had to face a false prophet. So did Paul.

John said in 1 John, Many false prophets have gone out into the world, whereby we know it is the last days of many antichrists have come. He says, whereby we know it's the final hour. Now, what's interesting is that these things did happen and they happened in the time frame, Jesus said.

But there is one more problem we have to overcome. That is, verses 24 and following about the sun and the moon being darkened and not giving their light and the stars falling and seeing the sun and man coming in the clouds and all of that. That definitely is something that needs to be given adequate attention for me to look at my watch and say, Well, I think I can get through this in 10 minutes.

It would be a folly. It deserves another hour. So what we will do is break here and then come back to this and take the rest of the chapter in a separate session where we will be unhurried.

But in summary, I just want to say that the the keys to understanding it are right there on the surface. There's a prediction. There's a question about the prediction, and there's an answer to each of the questions.

You know, if there was anything other than a strong prejudice toward seeing it a certain way, everyone would see it the right way. Everyone would see what Jesus said and what he was talking about. And let me just say this also before we close, and that is that many people who hear this kind of thing for the first time, they say, I got a call on the radio just yesterday.

So when asked me this very question, OK, so the all of the discourse was fulfilled in the first century with the destruction of Jerusalem. But aren't there some like double fulfillment of prophecy in the Bible? Maybe there's could there be a second fulfillment in

the end of the world? Couldn't it be that it had one fulfillment in 70 and a future fulfillment that it remains to be seen? Well, that's a good compromise with the with the mistaken view, I guess, if if someone wants to hold on to the mistaken view that it's not about the end of the world and also acknowledge the obvious view that it wasn't the end of the world, it was in the first century. Then we say, well, maybe it's both.

That way I can accept the new information that is obviously irreputable and I can still hang on to what I've always believed and always wanted to believe. I would say this, that there are some cases I know of in the Bible of double fulfillment of prophecy. There's a prophecy made in 2 Samuel chapter 7 that has a fulfillment in Solomon, but also has a secondary fulfillment in Christ because the New Testament tells us it has a secondary fulfillment in Christ.

There's a prophecy in Isaiah 7 that has a partial fulfillment or a fulfillment in Isaiah's own son, but the New Testament tells us there's a second fulfillment in Christ. There are some passages like that. There are things that David said in the Psalms that were true of him his own day and the New Testament says they are fulfilled in Christ.

So there are some prophecies in the Old Testament that had a short term fulfillment or application. But which thousands of years later, hundreds of years later in the New Testament, we see they have a secondary fulfillment in Christ. But as far as I know, all the fulfillments of any prophecy in the Bible, all the second fulfillments are fulfilled in Christ.

There is no example of Jesus predicting something beyond his time that had a short term fulfillment and a long term fulfillment. Although it would not be impossible for that to be the case, we have no examples of it. Everything in the Old Testament is a type of Jesus, and Jesus came in the first century and it's recorded in the New Testament.

And therefore the writers of the New Testament tell us this has fulfilled that, this fulfilled that, and that's how we know of some double fulfillments. If this is to have a double fulfillment, we would need something equally authoritative to tell us so. Some New Testament statement to that effect.

We don't have it. What we have is a prediction that such and such things will happen. We have history to tell us they did happen.

And beyond that, we have no other prediction. You see, you can't just say because my pastor taught me or the popular books tell me or because I want to believe there's a secondary fulfillment. That's not a good enough reason to add additional fulfillment.

It says in Micah 5 to that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem. It happened. We're not expecting a second fulfillment of that prophecy.

We're not expecting to be born in Bethlehem again. There's no reason to. It happened.

It was predicted it happened. There's no indication anywhere in Scripture it should happen again. Likewise, this was a prediction is made.

It happened like other many, many other prophecies that were fulfilled in Scripture. This one was fulfilled and there's no suggestion of a later fulfillment. Now, is it possible that the end times will have certain circumstances that resemble those? It's certainly not impossible because, frankly, there have been many times in history that had circumstances like these.

You could, if you knew history well enough and you and you would make the whole world your range of exploration and investigation, you would probably find hundreds of times and places where these kinds of things were happening. But that doesn't mean this is predicting all those times. This is predicting one particular time, a time that would happen in the lifetime of some of those then living and did.

Whatever may happen in the world after that is not predicted here. Now, I realize we have to talk about these passages about the sun and the moon and the stars falling and all that and the reference to the sun man coming. And we will talk about that.

But suffice it to say, we've got a prediction here about the destruction of Jerusalem that that was fulfilled in 80, 70, the parts that that we have not yet covered that seem difficult. Trust me. We will resolve them with no difficulty.

By comparing scripture with scripture, which is the best way to do it, rather than scripture with newspapers. And that's the approach we're going to take. So we'll finish this up in the next session.