

**Labor Day**  
*Mark 13:24-31*  
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Eureka Baptist Church, 2/25/18

**Introduction:**

- My former boss at Liberty University has a sister who was full-term in her pregnancy, and had a brain aneurism this past week. An emergency C-section was performed and the baby was saved. But mom is not doing well. She is in the Neurological ICU at Lynchburg General fighting for her life. She will likely not make it. So I would ask that you pray for Amber. But in this tragic situation, there is also great joy, for there is a new baby. Yet bitter/sweet doesn't even scratch the surface of the emotions right now.
- While it is not parallel in many ways, out of the great tragedy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, came new life.
- Various signs of the coming destruction of Jerusalem (v.5-13) were but the beginning of birth pains—contractions.
- Jesus gives the timing of when to flee Jerusalem before the desolation in verses 14-23. The contractions have given way to delivery.
- Today a baby is born. Jesus comes and fully destroys Jerusalem and the temple. And the final decisive statement is made that Jesus is the Messiah, that he is greater than the temple, that his Church is the sanctioned people of God.

**Reading and Prayer – Mark 13:1-31**

**Jesus Topples the Temple and Vindicates His Church (v.24-26)**

- The events take place “after that tribulation.” Matthew 24 states, “Immediately after the tribulation...”
- Remember, last week's sermon suggested that the tribulation in Mark 13 is not an end times event, but the events surrounding the Jewish Revolt and the siege of Jerusalem. The Jewish Revolt lasted for a little over 3 ½ years from 66 to 70 AD. The final siege of Jerusalem lasted from April until August 70 AD. The cities' supplies were cut off and famine was great. Hundreds of captured Jews were being crucified per day outside the city gates. Slowly but surely Jerusalem was falling and the final blow of the temple's destruction was at hand in this great tribulation.
- Celestial language:
  - V.24 – sun and moon will be darkened
  - V.25 – stars will fall; heavens will shake
  - We should read Mark 13 the way the Bible teaches us to read it, not the newspapers. “Remember, Jesus was speaking to a people saturated by Old Testament language, concepts, and imagery. From the earliest days of their lives they memorized and were taught the Old Testament. Thus, when Jesus spoke to them of things to come he used the prophetic vocabulary of the Old Testament which they would instantly recognize.” – Sam Storms
    - Speaking of the Medes being sent by God to destroy Babylon: Isaiah 13:9-10 – “Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce

anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.”

- Speaking of the destruction of Edom: Isaiah 34:3-5 – “Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise; the mountains shall flow with their blood. All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree. For my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; behold, it descends for judgment upon Edom, upon the people I have devoted to destruction.”
  - Concerning the destruction of Egypt: Ezekiel 32:6-8 – “I will drench the land even to the mountains with your flowing blood, and the ravines will be full of you. When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord GOD.”
  - So the Old Testament uses celestial language to describe not literal phenomenon in the heavens, but kingdoms falling. These kingdoms like Egypt, Babylon, and Edom seemed as fixed as the stars in heaven, but they will fall. So also Jesus is using celestial language to describe the fall of Jerusalem.
- Pentecost Sermon in Acts 2:
    - Peter is preaching the first public sermon after Jesus went back to heaven.
    - He is quoting Joel, saying that it is being fulfilled in that time.
    - Acts 2:17, 19-21 – “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will put out my Spirit on all flesh...And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
    - So as God pours out his Spirit on the early Christians, they will also witness these celestial events.
    - The celestial events:
      - Blood – from the destruction of Jerusalem
      - Fire and smoke – from the destruction of Jerusalem
      - The sun will go dark and the moon will look blood red – from the fire and smoke. Particles emitted from volcanic eruptions or forest fires today block out blue and green light waves but allow red waves to pass through, giving the moon an appearance of red.
      - Quote from Josephus about the temple fire: “Then one of the soldiers, without awaiting any orders and with no dread of so momentous a deed...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.”

- But Peter’s audience can be saved from the coming destruction in Jerusalem. In Acts 2:40 Peter states, “...Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So Jesus says that in “this generation” the events will take place, and Peter says in “this generation” you can be saved.
- “The Son of Man coming in clouds...”
  - We should understand this to be a figurative coming of Jesus, not a physical coming of Jesus.
  - Biblical examples of a figurative coming by God (review from first sermon):
    - Isaiah 19:1 – “An oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt; and the idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.” God is pictured as riding on a cloud to bring judgment on Egypt. But he is actually sending the Assyrian army to invade Egypt. The cloud is figurative. We would expect Jesus to use the same language as the Old Testament to his Jewish audience.
    - Revelation 2:5 – “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.” Jesus will figuratively come in judgment to the church of Ephesus.
- Matthew 24:30 – “...and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn...”
  - The word “earth” can always be translated “land”, meaning then the land of Israel/Jerusalem.
  - The tribes are often used in the Bible as a reference to the people of Israel.
  - Luke shows this text is about Jews in Jerusalem: Luke 21:24, “They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles...”
  - Thus, Israel will mourn, not with repentance, but with terror when Jesus comes through the Romans to destroy the city and the temple.

### **Jesus Sends Out His Church (v.27)**

- The parable of the wedding feast pictures the 70 AD events:
  - Matthew 22:5-9 – “But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’”
  - The guests who rejected the king’s invitation and even killed the messengers will be killed and the city burned. That’s exactly what happened. The Jews rejected Jesus as the King, as the Messiah, and Jesus sends soldiers to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple.

- But the parable continues with the servants going out to invite “as many as you find.” This is the Church going to the Gentile nations with the Gospel! This going out to the nations is what verse 27 describes.
- “Angels” (Read v.27 again)
  - “Angels” minister for the sake of the elect: Hebrews 1:14 – “Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?”
  - “Angels” can also be translated “messengers.” The translator decides based upon context how to translate it. So it is conceivable that Jesus sends out not his angels, but his messengers to the ends of the earth with the Gospel! The destruction of Jerusalem scatters the Christians to the ends of the earth to encounter other nations with the Gospel, to invite new guests to the wedding feast!
- “Gather his elect”
  - Who are the elect? Those who will believe in Jesus Christ. The elect are Christians.
  - 1 Peter 1:1 – “...To those who are elect exiles...”
  - How do the elect become Christians? By the preaching of the good news. Romans 10:13-15 – “For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”
  - We gather the elect by inviting people to the wedding feast of Jesus!
- “...from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.”
  - This is a way of saying from the four directions of the earth, north, south, east, and west. From horizon to horizon, people will receive the Gospel and therefore be gathered into the new temple of God—the Church.
  - In Matthew 8:11-12, Jesus tells the Gentile centurion, “I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness.” From east and west Jesus will gather Gentiles to be in the kingdom of God, while those who reject Jesus will be cast into outer darkness.
  - Luke 13:29 – “And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.”
  - Has not this happened? The Gospel has gone forth first to Jerusalem, then to Judea, then to Samaria, then to the uttermost parts of the earth! We are 6,000 miles away by air to Jerusalem, and here we meet in Eureka as ambassadors of the New Jerusalem of the Kingdom of God that is coming! God is truly gathering his elect.

### **Jesus Assures His Church All of His Teaching Will Come True (v.28-31)**

- These verses serve as the conclusion of all of his warnings about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

- We know that spring is near because the grass is greening and the flowers are starting to stem. The same analogy is used by Jesus in verse 28. The first-century Christians will see the signs of these things drawing near.
- “these things” (v.29): the destruction of the city and temple from Mark 13:1-2
- “the very gates” (v.29): quite literally the Son of Man’s judgement will come through the gates
- “this generation” (v.30): the generation of the disciples will we when these things take place
- “these things” (v.30): another reference to Mark 13:1-2
- Verse 31 is a transition verse to next week’s final sermon in Mark 13. Jesus forecasts that heaven and earth will pass away but that his words he just said about the destruction of the city and the temple will not!
- So next week’s sermon will be about heaven and earth passing away.
- But in verses 1-31, I have suggested it foreshadows the destruction of Jerusalem. And it happened!
  - Josephus records that over 1,100,000 people were killed in the siege of Jerusalem and 97,000 were enslaved.
  - Titus began his siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD at the end of Passover. Jesus died on the cross at the end of Passover. Could this be God showing that the siege of Jerusalem is connected to the rejection of the Messiah exactly forty years earlier? Interesting coincidence...
  - In Jeremiah 52:12, we are told that the first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians on the tenth day of the fifth month (Av), which happened in 587 BC. Josephus tells us that the second temple was destroyed on the tenth day of the fifth month (Av) by Titus! This was in early August, 70 AD. Could this be God showing that the destruction of the Temple was God’s will, that he had guided its destruction to the exact same day as its previous destruction 657 years before? Interesting coincidence...
  - Study the Bible and study the history, and you will see God’s sovereignty all over this.

### **Conclusion:**

- What Jesus has birthed on this Labor Day he will surely see through to maturation. The gates of hell will not prevail against it.
- Application:
  - Endure suffering. Jesus will vindicate his church once again when he returns. Like the story of Noah, people may scoff, but the rain indeed is coming.
  - Make disciples. Jesus is still sending out his church to gather the elect. Like the story of Noah, as he persisted in building the ark, we must persist in making disciples of the nations.
  - Believe God’s promises. Jesus gives us teaching that is true and trustworthy. Like the story of Noah, as he believed God’s promise of the coming flood, we must believe God’s promise of salvation and his return and ultimate justice.