

The Disciples Questions

[Mark 13:3-4](#)



Eschatology is a source of great confusion today. Since World War 1, we have seen a rise in predictions about the end times and the return of Christ. The re-establishment of Israel as a state in 1948 boosted even more predictions. The word "generation" in Mark 13:30 has grown increasingly longer in many eschatological views since that time! In the early 70s, Hal Lindsey led the pack of end-time books with his, *[The Late Great Planet Earth](#)*. It sold multiplied millions of copies. Lesser-known books sold plenty, with many of them, guardedly or blatantly, making predictions of when Jesus would return. Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins have been the latest to greatly profit from the end-times' craze with their series of novels, movie, and *[Left Behind](#)* knick-knacks.

This morning we want to look at the disciples' question to Jesus in verses 3 and 4 of Mark 13, commonly known as the "Olivet Discourse." This is by far the most full and explicit of our Lord's prophetic utterances regarding His Second Coming. If we understand this chapter, we will understand eschatology, we will understand the end times, the great tribulation, and the Second Coming of Christ. Verse 4 is the most important verse in this whole chapter. If you don't understand their questions, you will never understand Jesus' answer. We must be sure we understand the questions.

Let me ask you a question that is of the utmost importance to hermeneutics: Is the Bible written **to you** or **for you**? Do you know of any book in the Bible written to the saints in Chesapeake, VA? I don't. The Scriptures are not written to us! They are *for* us, but they were not written *to* us.

A principle of hermeneutics is **Original Relevance**—what did the original readers understand the text to mean? The Bible was written to real people in real places facing real circumstances. In our text in Mark 13 Jesus is not talking to us, but to His disciples.

The way many deal with these questions is a good example of how our paradigms can blind us from seeing certain truths. If, in your eschatological paradigm, you see the Second Coming of Christ as the end of the physical world, a cataclysmic, earth burning, total destruction of life as we now know it, you will certainly miss what Jesus is saying here. Because life goes on, you can't believe that Jesus returned as He said he would. It just won't fit your paradigm. Let's begin by looking at a verse that shatters the paradigm that views the Second Coming as the end of the world:

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 NASB)

Now, if the Thessalonians believed that the nature of the Second Coming was an earth burning, total destruction of planet earth, how could they be deceived about its arrival? If the Second Coming was, as many view it today, Paul could have written them and said, "Look out the window, the earth is still here, so the Lord has obviously not come." They thought it had already happened, so they must have viewed the **nature** of the Second Coming differently than most folks today view it.

Let's see if we can understand the disciples' questions, then we will be able to understand Jesus' answer. Correctly understanding this question could cause a paradigm shift in the eschatology of many.

Let me briefly remind you of the context of this question. Throughout Mark's gospel Jesus continually warned the Jews of their coming judgment because of their apostasy:

"What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vine-growers, and will give the vineyard to others. (Mark 12:9 NASB)

Judgment is coming because of their rejection of the Messiah.

Now, with this in mind, we move into chapter 13 and the Olivet Discourse of Jesus. In verse 1, as they depart from the Temple, they say to Jesus, *"Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"* In verse 2, Jesus predicted that this massive temple would be utterly destroyed in an act of God's judgment.

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:3-4 NASB)

The [Mount of Olives](#) was just east of Jerusalem across the [Kidron Valley](#). It is about a mile in length and about 700 feet in height, and overlooks Jerusalem, so that from its summit almost every part of the city could be seen. It was from Jerusalem about a Sabbath day's journey:

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. (Acts 1:12 NASB)

A Sabbath day's journey was as far as the law allowed (not the law of Moses, but that advanced by the Jewish teachers) one to travel on the Sabbath. This was 2,000 paces or cubits, which would be not quite one mile.

This walk, uphill with sandals, would have taken them maybe 15-30 minutes. During this time they were no doubt thinking about what Jesus had just said about the destruction of the temple. Once Jesus sat down on the mountain, the disciples approached Him and questioned Him about the temple's destruction. According to Mark 13:3, the questions were asked by Peter, James, John, and Andrew. Matthew and Mark say they came *"privately."* In both Matthew and Mark, this is used to set the disciples apart from the crowds, not from each other. I think that this means that they were the ones who raised the questions, not that they were the only disciples present.

Their question was two-fold: **First** they ask, *"When will these things be?"* All three of the Synoptic Gospels ask, **"When?"**

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:4 NASB)

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3 NASB)

And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" (Luke 21:7 NASB)

The "*these things*" refers to the temple's destruction in verse 2. In verse 1 the disciples point out the temple buildings to Jesus. In verse 2, Jesus says, "*All 'these things' shall be destroyed.*" And in verse 4 they ask "When?" It should be clear that they are asking, "WHEN will the temple be destroyed?" After all Jesus had just said about judgment on Jerusalem, and then about not one stone being left upon another, the disciples' response is, "When?" That makes sense, doesn't it? I would hope so.

Let's think about their question for a moment. Their response to Jesus' prophecy of destruction is informative. They don't say, "No way!" or "How could that be?" or "Are you kidding us, come on!" They don't even question that it will happen, they simply ask, "When?" This is interesting to me, because it says to me that after spending three years watching Jesus do so many miraculous things, they are finally starting to believe Him.

In order to appreciate the significance of their trust, we must consider that these four Jewish boys are shocked by what Jesus said. They had been raised to believe that the temple would stand there throughout the entire new age introduced by the Messiah. The Rabbis in their Sabbath synagogues had taught them that that is what the Lord meant when speaking to Solomon:

Now it came about when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all that Solomon desired to do, ² that the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ And the LORD said to him, 'I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. (1 Kings 9:1-3 NASB)

They'd been told that Psalm 78 had the same meaning:

But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved. ⁶⁹ And He built His sanctuary like the heights, Like the earth which He has founded forever. (Psalms 78:68-69 NASB)

But our Lord has told them that this building is going to be totally demolished and they believe Him and simply ask, "When?"

Peter didn't believe Him when He told the disciples that He must be crucified and buried and rise again the third day. "*Far be it for you to die like that,*" he said to Jesus. The wailing women in Jairus' household didn't believe Him when He told them that Jairus' daughter wasn't dead, but asleep. They mocked Him. The Roman soldiers didn't believe His claims to be a king. They blindfolded Him, and hit Him, and plucked the hairs on His beard. They mocked Him and dressed Him in a purple robe and pretended to bow before Him. One dying thief didn't believe when Jesus told the other, "*You will be with me in Paradise.*" He cursed Jesus. But after these disciples had been with Jesus for three years, after they knew Him better than anyone else in the world, when they had heard all His teaching and seen His great miracles, then, when He said to them on this occasion, "*Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down,*" they replied, "When?" If Jesus said it would happen, they trusted Him. How about you? Do you have that kind of faith?

The **second** part of their question is, "*What will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?*" To help us understand the question, we need to compare all three Synoptic Gospels:

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:4 NASB)

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3 NASB)

And they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" (Luke 21:7 NASB)

Comparing all three accounts shows us that the disciples considered His "coming" and "the end of the age" to be identical events with the destruction of the temple.

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:4 NASB)

Notice in the first part of the verse he says, "When will these things be?" referring to the temples' destruction. Then in the second half, he asks, "What will be the sign when all 'these things' are going to be fulfilled?" From Matthew's account we learn that the sign of His coming and the end of age was the same as the "these things," which referred to the destruction of Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70. These are not separate questions that can be divided up into different time-events. The disciples had one thing, and only one thing, on their mind, and that was the destruction of the temple. With the destruction of the temple, they connected the coming of Messiah and the end of the age.

Listen to what some have done to the disciples' questions. Ryrie says this, "In this discourse Jesus answered two of the three questions the disciples asked. **He does not answer 'When will these things happen?'** He answers, 'What will be the sign of Your coming?'"

John Walvoord, in his commentary on Matthew, says this, "Matthew's gospel does not answer the first question, which relates to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70."

Their main question was, "WHEN?" And Ryrie and Walvoord say the Lord doesn't even answer it. He ignores their question about the destruction of the temple and He proceeds to talk about a far distant, 2,000 plus years, coming and end of the world. Does that make sense to you? More important, would it make sense to them? I think not!

The disciples associated the destruction of the temple with Christ's coming. The Greek word for "coming" is *parousia*, which means: "arrival", not return. The disciples could not have been asking about a future return of Christ, because they did not understand that He was leaving. They believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Look at the question posed in:

"Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" (John 4:29 NASB)

"Could this be the Christ (Messiah)." In the Synoptic Gospels, the way Jesus acted and spoke led naturally to the dialogue at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:29). Jesus asked His disciples:

And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "Thou art the Christ." (Mark 8:29 NASB)

This title carried overtones of political power, especially in one strand of Jewish hope represented by the Psalms of Solomon, which gave one of the clearest expressions of the Jews continuing hope. The Psalms of Solomon was part of the intertestamental literature ([PSEUDEPIGRAPHA](#)) not accepted into the Christian or Jewish canon of Scripture. It was written around 70-40 B.C. The

Psalms of Solomon was a Jewish writing of the Messiah as the son of David. Their Messiah was a warrior-prince who would expel the hated Romans from Israel and bring in a kingdom in which the Jews would be promoted to world dominion. Jesus, therefore, accepted Peter's confession and immediately spoke of the sufferings of Messiah to correct the disciple's idea that the Messiah cannot suffer:

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31 NASB)

For Peter, Messiah was a title of a glorious personage, both nationalistic and victorious in battle. They believed that Messiah would come and rule, they had no idea that He would come, then leave, then come again. Peter reacts strongly when Christ talks about His death:

And He was stating the matter plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. (Mark 8:32 NASB)

His death would be the end of their hopes and dreams; they couldn't understand that He would be put to death. The Jewish understanding of Messiah is clearly expressed in:

The multitude therefore answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ [Messiah] is to remain forever; and how can You say, "The Son of Man must be lifted up"? Who is this Son of Man?" (John 12:34 NASB)

They didn't conceive of Messiah leaving once He had arrived. They thought He would come and set up His rule.

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." (Micah 5:2 NASB)

The word "ruler" is the Hebrew word *mashal*: "a prim. root; to rule:—(have, make to have) dominion, governor, have power." They viewed Messiah as a Ruler:

Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet, (Psalms 8:6 NASB)

"Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD."¹³ "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the LORD, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.'" (Zechariah 6:12-13 NASB)

The crowning of Joshua foreshadowed the crowning of Messiah. So you can easily understand that they were not looking for Jesus to leave, but to set up His kingdom.

Jesus talked to them about His death and going to the Father, but they did not understand it at all:

"Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.'³⁴ "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."³⁵ "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one

another." ³⁶ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." (John 13:33-36 NASB)

"A little while, and you will no longer behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." ¹⁷ Some of His disciples therefore said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not behold Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" (John 16:16-17 NASB)

This account in John takes place after He had given them the Olivet Discourse, and they still didn't understand that He was leaving them.

Now let me ask you a question, "If they had no idea that Jesus was going to leave them, why would they ask Him about His return?" **They didn't understand anything about a Second Coming.** You might ask, "Why did they ask, 'What will be the sign of Your coming?' if they didn't think He was leaving?" Good question. The answer is in understanding the Jewish concept of the *parousia*. As I said, the word meant: "arrival or presence", and not return. It didn't refer to any future return of Christ. To the disciples the "parousia" of the Son of man signified the full manifestation of His Messiahship; His glorious appearing in power. William Barclay says of *parousia*, "It is the regular word for the arrival of a governor into his province or for the coming of a king to his subjects. It regularly describes a coming in authority and in power."

The disciples were accustomed to hearing Jesus speak of His coming in His kingdom, coming in His glory and power, and that it would be within their lifetime:

"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and WILL THEN RECOMPENSE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. ²⁸ "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." (Matthew 16:27-28 NASB)

They didn't know He was leaving, but they looked for a time when He would appear in full glory and power bringing in the Kingdom and rewarding every man. Some try to explain this verse as relating it to the transfiguration or Pentecost. But the verse says it would be a time when every man would be rewarded for their works. That cannot refer to the transfiguration or Pentecost, but it does refer to His Second Coming, as can be see from:

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. (Revelation 22:12 NASB)

Compare that with Matthew 16:27. They knew that His *parousia* would be in their lifetime, and they looked for, and expected it. Even after His resurrection, they questioned Him about the restored kingdom:

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; (Acts 1:6-7 NASB)

They didn't understand that Christ would sit upon His throne by means of His resurrection and ascension:

"Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ "And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS

DESCENDANTS UPON HIS THRONE, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. ³² "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ³³ "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. (Acts 2:29-33 NASB)

Christ was now reigning on the Father's right hand, and the manifestation of that kingdom would come when Christ would come in judgment on Jerusalem:

"For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, ³⁵ UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET.'" (Acts 2:34-35 NASB)

Now, you might ask, "Why would the disciples connect the destruction of the temple with Christ's *parousia*?" The disciples knew the Scriptures, and they knew that the destruction of Jerusalem would usher in Messiah's kingdom:

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. ² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. ³ Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. ⁴ And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. ⁵ And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! (Zechariah 14:1-5 NASB)

In the day of the Lord, Jerusalem is destroyed, and the Lord comes with His saints. Also, look at:

"Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:26 NASB)

The disciples believed that the coming of Messiah would be simultaneous with the destruction of the city and the temple.

We see from Matthew's account that they also associated the destruction of the temple with the end of age:

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3 NASB)

Now again, the "these things" the destruction of the temple, are connected with the end of the age. Some translations render this "world." That is very confusing. The Greek word used here is *aion*, which means: "age." It is not the Greek word "*kosmos*" or "*oikoumene*," which means: "the world and its inhabitants." It is not talking about the end of the physical world; the word *aion* means: "age, era, or a period of time." The expression "*end of the age*" refers to "the end of the Jewish age." The

disciples knew that the fall of the temple and the destruction of the city meant the end of the Old Covenant age and the inauguration of a new age.

William Barclay says, *"Time was divided by the Jews into two great periods--this present age, and the age to come. The present age is wholly bad and beyond all hope of human reformation. It can be mended only by the direct intervention of God. When God does intervene, the golden age, the age to come, will arrive. But in between the two ages there will come the Day of the Lord, which will be a time of terrible and fearful upheaval, like the birth-pangs of a new age."*

Remember from Zechariah 14 that the "Day of the Lord" and the destruction of Jerusalem were connected.

William Hendriksen, in his commentary on Matthew, says this about 24:3, *"The very form of the question is cast--the juxtaposition (a putting or being side by side or close together) of the clauses--seems to indicate that, as these men interpret the Master's words, Jerusalem's fall, particularly the destruction of the temple, would mean the end of the world. In this opinion they were partly mistaken, as Jesus is about to show. A lengthy period of time would intervene between Jerusalem's fall and the culmination of the age, the Second Coming."*

He sees that by the form of the question, they viewed the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the age to be simultaneous. But he says they were wrong. Were they wrong? If they were mistaken, why didn't the Lord correct them? Why didn't the Lord say the temple will be destroyed soon, but the end of the age is a long way off? What Jesus did tell them was that all the things they asked about would be fulfilled in their lifetime:

"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. (Mark 13:30 NASB)

To the Jews, time was divided into two great periods, the Mosaic Age and the Messianic Age. The Messiah was viewed as one who would bring in a new world. The period of the Messiah was, therefore, correctly characterized by the Synagogue as "the world to come." All through the New Testament we see two ages in contrast: "This age" and the "age to come." The understanding of these two ages and when they changed is fundamental to interpreting the Bible. Most Christians believe that most all of the New Testament prophecies deal with a time **future** to us. When they read in the New Testament the words "the age to come," they think of a yet future age. But the New Testament writers were referring to the Christian age. We live in what was to them the "age to come," the New Covenant age.

Let's look at some scriptures that talk about these two ages:

"And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come." (Matthew 12:32 NASB)

The word "come" at the end of the verse is the Greek word *mello*, which means "about to be." We could translate this, the "age about to come" (in the first century). Many think that the age to come will be a sinless age; not according to this verse. Sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in that age, referring to the age of the New Covenant, our present age:

"So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous,⁵⁰ and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:49-50 NASB)

Notice who is taken—the wicked. Is this a reverse rapture? I believe this speaks of the Judgment of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It was the end of the Jewish age, and the wicked Jews were burned in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; ⁷ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; ⁸ the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; (1 Corinthians 2:6-8 NASB)

The wisdom and rulers of that age were passing away. He is speaking of the Jewish leaders and the Old Covenant system.

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11 NASB)

Paul said very plainly that the end of the ages was coming upon them, the first century saints.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB)

Jesus was speaking in the last days. Last days of what? The last days of the Old Covenant age.

Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Hebrews 9:26 NASB)

When was it that Jesus appeared? He was born not at the beginning, but at the end of the ages. To suppose that he meant that Jesus' incarnation came near the end of the world would be to make his statement false. The world has already lasted longer since the incarnation than the whole duration of the Mosaic economy, from the exodus to the destruction of the temple. Jesus was manifest at the end of the Jewish age. Peter says the same thing:

For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you (1 Peter 1:20 NASB)

Jesus came during the last days of the age that was the Old Covenant age, the Jewish age. That age came to an end with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. All the things prophesied by Jesus in Mark 13 occurred at the end of that age. Nothing is taught in the Bible about a millennial age. The Bible talks about "this age" the Old Covenant age, and the "age to come" the New Covenant age. The millennium was the time of transition between "this age" the Old Covenant age, and the "age to come" the NOW present New Covenant age.

You and I live, in what was to the writers of the New Testament, the age to come. We are no longer under the Old Covenant; we live in the Messianic age of the New Covenant. The age we live in will never end, it is an everlasting age:

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, (Hebrews 13:20 NASB)

The Bible doesn't teach about an age future to us. The age in which we live is the everlasting age of the New Covenant. Jesus' disciples believed that His presence would be acknowledged, and so would the end of the age, when He arrived in judgment on Jerusalem. They were thinking of the temple and the immediate future; would He speak to them of the world and the indefinitely remote?

F.C. Cook, in his commentary, says this, "*From the form of the question we may infer that two separate events, the destruction of the temple, and the final coming of Christ at the end of the world, were closely connected together in the minds of the disciples. The popular belief of the Jews at this time seems to have been that the coming of the Messiah would be simultaneous with the destruction of the city and temple*" (Emphasis mine, D.B. Curtis). Cook sees them as two separate events, but admits that the disciples didn't. I think he sees them as separate because his paradigm of the Second Coming blinds him.

Commenting on Mark 13, Ray Steadman wrote, "*Now we come to the great prophecy of Jesus which deals with the last days of the planet Earth just before the return of its King in power and glory.*"

Geoff Thomas writes, "*There are two different events that Jesus is speaking of in this chapter. The first is the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70; the second is the actual end of the world. The first mini-judgment is a foretaste of the second maxi-judgment.*"

John Stevenson writes, "*This chapter contains predictive prophecy. It tells us about things that God is going to do in the future. Jesus is speaking here about an event which took place within 40 years of His speaking. But later in this chapter He will be speaking about an event that has not happened yet.*"

All the commentators want to see two separate events in this chapter, the soon coming destruction of Jerusalem and the far distant coming of Christ. The only way to see two different events in this chapter separated by thousands of years is by forcing your own ideas on the text this is eisegesis!

So we have seen that the disciples' questions all revolved around the temple and its destruction. To them the destruction of the temple would mean the *parousia* of the Lord and the end of the age. The answer that Jesus gives is to THEM, not us, not some future generation, and it all deals with the fall of Jerusalem. You must keep this in mind as you look at Jesus' answer to their questions.

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