



Notes are quotes from this book. Some scriptural translations herein are the author's rather than a standard translation.

The overall arrangement of his Gospel into three geographical units:

- Jesus' ministry in Galilee (1:1-8:21)
- his journey to Jerusalem (8:22-10:52)
- his ministry in Jerusalem (11:1-16:8).

There are multiple ways that commentators have divided out Chapter 13, and this is the one that Stein settled on:

**13:1-4:** Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the temple (and Jerusalem)

**13:5-23:** The coming destruction of the temple (and Jerusalem) and the sign preceding it

**13:24-27:** The coming of the Son of Man

**13:28-31:** The parable of the fig tree and the coming destruction of the temple (and Jerusalem)

**13:32-37:** The parable of the watchman /exhortation to be alert for the coming of the Son of Man

This chapter serves as the conclusion to 11:1–13:37: As a result of the failure of Israel and above all its leadership to fulfill its calling and bear fruit (11:12-25).

### **The Destruction of the Temple Foretold**

13 As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!"

...a unity in its content in that it involves two issues: the destruction of the temple (and the city of Jerusalem) and the coming of the Son of Man.

<sup>2</sup> Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

<sup>3</sup> When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately,  
<sup>4</sup> “Tell us, when will this be,

and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?”

Jesus accepts the disciples’ request for a sign because this is not an attempt to test him or to satisfy their curiosity and supply additional eschatological information to complete their apocalyptic time charts. It is rather in order to be forewarned and prepared for the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy in 13:2. The disciples’ twofold question does not seek information as to “how” this destruction will take place. The Old Testament provided more than enough information in its many descriptions of how this took place when Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 B.C. and the tribulations preceding and following this event.

**Mark 13:2**—“Do you see these [*tautas*] great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

**Luke 21:6**—“As for these things [*tautas*] that you see . . . not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down.”

**Mark 13:4a**—“Tell us, when will these things be?” (author’s translation)

**Luke 21:7b**—“Teacher, when will these things be?” (author’s translation)

**Mark 13:4b**—“and what will be the sign that all these things [*tauta panta*] are about to be accomplished?”

**Luke 21:7c**—“and what will be the sign that these things [*tauta*] are about to take place?” It is clear that Luke understands “these things” in 21:6 as referring to the temple and the structures associated with it...

Matthew appears to understand Mark’s “all these things” in 13:4b as including *something more than the “these things” of 13:4a*. The two parallel passages are:

**Mark 13:4a**—“Tell us, when will these things be?”

**Matthew 24:3b**—“Tell us, when will these things be?”

While scholars have enumerated features of prophecy and the apocalyptic, many of these are more technical:

Stein says there is no clear distinction between the genre of prophecy and that of apocalyptic

<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup> Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. <sup>7</sup> When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. <sup>8</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

### Persecution Foretold

<sup>9</sup> "As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. <sup>10</sup> And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. <sup>11</sup> When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. <sup>12</sup> Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; <sup>13</sup> and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

### The Desolating Sacrilege

<sup>14</sup> "But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be

This chapter is sometimes experienced as difficult and confusing until we sort out the fact that different audiences are addressed:

- There is the teaching of the historical Jesus to his disciples:
- The second involving the situation of the early church between the death and resurrection of Jesus and the writing of the Gospels, and
- the third involving the situation in which and for which the Evangelist Mark wrote his Gospel.

The Gentile listeners would not be concerned about being handed over to Jewish leaders and beaten. This would have been a concern of the Jewish listeners.

Thus, whereas an exhortation to flee the coming destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in 13:14 would make good sense to Jesus' original audience, it would not have direct relevance for Mark's readers.

There is no criticism by Jesus in the present account with respect to the disciples' request for a sign. Their request for a sign stands in sharp contrast with the demand of the Pharisees for Jesus to do a sign! Furthermore, a sign is referred to in Mark 13:14 and 28-29 concerning when all these things are about to take place. Rather than rebuking the disciples for their two questions, Jesus proceeds to answer their request in 13:5-37.

(let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; <sup>15</sup> the one on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away; <sup>16</sup> the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. <sup>17</sup> Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! <sup>18</sup> Pray that it may not be in winter. <sup>19</sup> For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be. <sup>20</sup> And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days. <sup>21</sup> And if anyone says to you at that time, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'Look! There he is!'—do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. <sup>23</sup> But be alert; I have already told you everything.

**The Coming of the Son of Man**

<sup>24</sup> "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup> and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>26</sup> Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

...the event described in 13:24-27 is both separated ("after that [tribulation]") and connected with ("but in those days") the destruction of the temple in 13:5-23. In addition, certain descriptions of the destruction coming on Jerusalem in 13:5-23 seem to describe more than what took place in A.D. 70: the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations (13:10), the abomination of desolation must first take place (13:14), a "great" tribulation must come such as never was nor will be again (13:19)

Matthew has added to Mark 13 a considerable amount of material dealing with the coming of the Son of Man not found in Mark or Luke.

...all five of his discourses end with a summary conclusion:

"Now when Jesus had finished saying these things" (Mt 7:28-29);

### **The Lesson of the Fig Tree**

<sup>28</sup> “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

### **The Necessity for Watchfulness**

<sup>32</sup> “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup> Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup> or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup> And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

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“Now when Jesus had finished instructing” (Mt 11:1);

“Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables” (Mt 13:34-35);

“When Jesus had finished saying these things” (Mt 19:1);

“When Jesus had finished saying all these things” (Mt 26:1).

Matthew’s addition of supplementary material on the second coming contained in Matthew 24:37–25:46 to the material he found in Mark 13:1-37 (Mt 24:1-36) probably caused him to enlarge the boundaries of the two-part question of the disciples in 13:4 and add a specific reference to the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the age.

Mark considered the Jesus traditions he was reporting as sacred traditions: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but [Jesus’] words will not pass away” (13:31).

Old Testament prophecies frequently tie the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple together. Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height. (Mic 3:12; cf. Jer 26:17-18) The Lord has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary; he has delivered into the hands of the enemy the walls of her palaces . . . The LORD

## African Memory of the Gospel of Mark: Chapter 13

	<p>determined to lay in ruins the wall of daughter Zion . . . he caused rampart and wall to lament; they languish together. Her gates have sunk into the ground; he has ruined and broken her bars. (Lam 2:7-9; cf. also Jer 7:13-20)<sup>19</sup></p>
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