

# ***The Gospel of Mark***

## ***The Last Days***

Lesson #10 for September 7, 2024

Scriptures: Mark 12:41-44; 13:1-32; Daniel 7:25; 9:24-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

1. We begin this lesson with the story of the **widow who dropped two small copper coins into the offering boxes** at the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was sitting quietly in the temple court section for women. The offering receptacles were large and located in the women's area in which were allowed women as well as men because the religious leaders wanted everyone to be able to give money. Seeing the widow's gift, Jesus made a striking comment about that woman's action.

**Mark 12:41-44:** <sup>41</sup> As Jesus sat near the temple treasury, he watched the people as they dropped in their money. Many rich men dropped in a lot of money; <sup>42</sup> then a poor widow came along and dropped in **two little copper coins**, worth about a penny. <sup>43</sup> He called his disciples together and said to them, "I tell you that this poor widow put more in the offering box than all the others. <sup>44</sup> For the others put in what they had to spare of their riches; but **she, poor as she is, put in all she had — she gave all she had to live on.**"—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Mark 12:41-44). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup>

2. At the time of the Passover, many of the wealthy of Jerusalem were giving enormous offerings and making a great display of doing so. This widow quietly approached one of the offering locations and when she thought no one was watching, she cast in two tiny *lepta*. Two *lepta* would be the amount that would be paid for a normal worker, working 15 minutes.
3. Why did Jesus make a big thing out of that woman's offering? And why did Jesus say that this woman gave more than anyone else? Most of those who were giving generous offerings did so out of their abundance. However, this woman tossed in all that she had. We, of course, do not know anything about the story that led up to this event. We would know nothing at all about her situation if it had not been for the words of Jesus recorded in the Bible.
4. One very important lesson we need to learn from this story is that it is almost certain that the Sadducees who would have collected those offerings would probably have sneered at the woman's offering of two *lepta*. They did not care about those tiny little amounts. What do you think men like Caiaphas and Annas would do with two *lepta*?
5. It is often thought that when we look at the way certain leaders are using church funds and we are not happy about what they are doing with the church's money, that is a good excuse for withholding our offerings. Surely, if there was anyone who would have had reason for withholding his/her offerings under such circumstances, it would have been that widow. But, Jesus said very clearly that the issue is that she gave her all to God, not asking any questions about how it would be used.
6. We are not disputing the fact that leaders have a very serious responsibility for managing money which is given to the church. However, even if they are squandering that money, it does not relieve us of the responsibility of paying our tithes and offerings which we are giving to God and not to church leaders who may be mismanaging them.

7. Turn now to Mark 13, **Jesus talked about hardships to follow—at the destruction of Jerusalem, during Christian persecution throughout the ages, and specifically before His second coming.** Jesus had spent the whole day in the temple courts, contending with Pharisees and Sadducees and a scribe. Notice what happened at the end of that day.

**Mark 13:1-4:** <sup>1</sup> As Jesus was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said, “Look, Teacher! What wonderful stones and buildings!”

<sup>2</sup> Jesus answered, “You see these great buildings? Not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down.”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, across from the Temple, when Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him in private. <sup>4</sup> “Tell us when this will be,” they said, “and tell us what will happen to show that the time has come for all these things to take place.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

8. Herod had been raised in Rome as a friend of the Caesars. When Caesar asked Herod to go to Palestine and rule there, he recognized that Herod was not a strict Jew but was half Idumean, a descendent of Esau. With Caesar’s approval and to gain favor with the Jews, Herod began expanding the temple in Jerusalem around 20 B.C. Herod managed to increase the area known as the Temple Mount to be a considerably larger area than it was originally.
9. The temple in Jerusalem was an amazing structure, made largely of beautiful white marble and decorated with gold. It shone beautifully in the sunlight. The stones of enormous size, some of them weighing hundreds of tons, were carved and put in their places. To get an idea of the size and expense that must have gone into constructing that temple, we notice that the Parthenon in Athens, that enormous temple which dominates most of Athens, had 46 outer columns and 23 inner columns. By contrast, Herod’s Temple had 162 pillars of a similar size just in one of the porticos on the south side of the temple complex. Josephus reported that each of those pillars was about 20 feet in circumference or 7 feet in diameter. It must have seemed to the disciples like the destruction of this temple, which had taken so many years to build, would be like the end of the world. How do you suppose those large stones were moved a considerable distance by hand and put in position in the temple?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] As Christ’s attention was attracted to the magnificence of the temple, what must have been the unuttered thoughts of that Rejected One! The view before Him was indeed beautiful, but He said with sadness, I see it all. The buildings are indeed wonderful. You point to these walls as apparently indestructible; but listen to My words: The day will come when “there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*\* 627.2.‡

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10. The four disciples who were with Jesus—Peter, James, John, and Andrew—must have immediately wondered what Jesus was talking about. They must have wondered when such a thing could happen. In Mark 13:5-13, (See Item #35.) Jesus spent most of His time talking not about when those events would take place, but rather what they should do to prepare for that time. He gave specific warnings of events that would occur before the destruction and directions about what they were to do when they saw that Jerusalem was surrounded by the enemy. Notice what the Christians did and what the results were.

[EGW:] Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign [and fled].—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 30.2.†‡

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.128&index=0>†‡

11. Historically, we know that the Roman general, Titus, is the one who finally conquered Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the Jewish people led ultimately to that destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army.

[BSG:] The Fulfillment of Prophecy Hundreds of Years After the Time of the Prophet Daniel—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 134.‡

[EGW:] ... The Jews had rejected the entreaties of the Son of God, and now expostulation and entreaty only made them more determined to resist to the last. In vain were the efforts of Titus to save the temple; One greater than he had declared that not one stone was to be left upon another.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 32.3.‡

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.136&index=0>†‡

12. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian described the destruction of Jerusalem.

[Josephus in BSG:] “Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp around the holy house. But as for that house, God had, for certain, long ago doomed it to fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous [Ab] [sic] upon which it was formerly burned by the king of Babylon; although these flames took their rise from the Jews themselves, and were occasioned to them; for upon Titus’s retiring, the rebellious lay still for a little while, and then attacked the Romans again, when those that guarded the holy house fought with those that quenched the fire that was burning in the inner [court of the] temple; but these Romans put the Jews to flight, and proceeded as far as the holy house itself.

“... Now around the altar lay dead bodies heaped one upon the other, as at the steps going up to it ran a great quantity of their blood, where also the dead bodies that were killed above [on the altar] fell down.”—Josephus, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, book 6, trans. William Whitston (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), p. 896.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 133-134].†‡Ω§

13. Compare the words of Ellen White.

[EGW:] After the destruction of the temple, the whole city soon fell into the hands of the Romans. The leaders of the Jews forsook their impregnable towers, and Titus found them solitary. He gazed upon them with amazement, and declared that God had given them into his hands; for no engines, however powerful, could have prevailed against those stupendous battlements. Both the city and the temple were razed to their foundations, and the ground upon which the holy house had stood was “plowed like a field.” Jeremiah 26:18. In the siege and the slaughter that followed, more than a million of the people perished; the survivors were carried away as captives, sold as slaves, dragged to Rome to grace the conqueror’s triumph, thrown to wild beasts in the amphitheaters, or scattered as homeless wanderers throughout the earth.—Ellen G. White, *The*

14. Read **Mark 13:14-18**. Jesus mentioned the term *abomination of desolation* or *the awful horror*. What does that refer to? Then Jesus, seeing this scene probably envisioned in His mind, remarked about how important it would be for Christians to hasten away from Jerusalem as soon as they saw those key events taking place. It would be a special problem for mothers with young babies and pregnant women. And He asked them to pray that it would not happen in winter or on the Sabbath! Then, Jesus mentioned a very important point and He emphasized it: “(Note to the reader: be sure to understand what this means!).” That should grab our attention to see if we understand it. It turns out that the expression came from places in Daniel such as Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; and even a parallel suggestion in Daniel 8:13. So, the destruction of Jerusalem had been prophesied by Daniel.

**Daniel 9:26-27:** [The angel Gabriel said:] <sup>26</sup> “And at the end of that time God’s chosen leader will be killed unjustly. The city and the Temple will be destroyed by the invading army of a powerful ruler. The end will come like a flood, bringing the war and destruction which God has prepared. <sup>27</sup>That ruler will have a firm agreement with many people for seven years, and when half this time is past, he will put an end to sacrifices and offerings. **The Awful Horror** will be placed on the highest point of the Temple and will remain there until the one who put it there meets the end which God has prepared for him.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Daniel 11:31:** “Some of his soldiers will desecrate the Temple. They will stop the daily sacrifices and set up **The Awful Horror**.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Daniel 12:11:** “From the time the daily sacrifices are stopped, that is, from the time of **The Awful Horror**, 1,290 days will pass.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

15. In Daniel 9:26, the Hebrew word *māšīah*, in English *Messiah* or *God’s chosen leader*, refers to the coming of Jesus Christ. The 490-year or 70-week prophecy given in Daniel 9:24-27 can be attached to the prophecy to restore and rebuild Jerusalem given to Ezra by Artaxerxes as noted in Ezra 7:18, dated to the year 457 B.C.; A.D. 34 is 490 years later.
16. Many so-called scholars try to connect *the awful horror* or *abomination of desolation* to the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes which took place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. But, if we carefully read the words of Jesus, He said that that event would be still in the future. That makes Antiochus Epiphanes impossible as the fulfillment of that prophecy.
17. Ellen White suggested that the destruction of Jerusalem was a foretaste of what will happen prior to the second coming of Jesus.

[EGW:] Christ saw in Jerusalem a symbol of the world hardened in unbelief and rebellion, and hastening on to meet the retributive judgments of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 22.1.†

18. Jesus talked about His second coming and what to be aware of in those days.

**Mark 13:19-23:** <sup>19</sup> “For the trouble of those days will be far worse than any the world has ever known from the very beginning when God created the world until the present time. Nor will there ever be anything like it again. <sup>20</sup>But the Lord has reduced the number of those days; if he had not, nobody would survive. For

the sake of his chosen people, however, he has reduced those days.

<sup>21</sup> “Then, if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ — do not believe him. <sup>22</sup>For false Messiahs and false prophets will appear. They will perform miracles and wonders in order to deceive even God’s chosen people, if possible. <sup>23</sup>Be on your guard! I have told you everything before the time comes.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

19. Jesus told more about the last days.

**Mark 13:24-31:** <sup>24</sup> “In the days after that time of trouble the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine, <sup>25</sup>the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in space will be driven from their courses. <sup>26</sup>Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in the clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>He will send the angels out to the four corners of the earth to gather God’s chosen people from one end of the world to the other....

<sup>30</sup>Remember that **all these things will happen before the people now living have all died**. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

20. But, all those people living in Jesus’s day have died. How can we reconcile what Jesus said?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] What, however, does Jesus mean by “this generation” and “that day” or “that hour”? These words have troubled many people because obviously the generation to whom Jesus spoke is long dead.

A number of solutions to this passage have been suggested. Some argue that **the word “generation” can refer to a race of people, in this case the Jews. That is to say that the Jewish race would not perish before Christ returns. Another solution is to speak of the generation of people who see all the signs fulfilled as those that will not pass away before Christ returns.**

**But a simpler solution is to note that in Mark 13:30, Jesus uses the word “this” as in “this generation,” and in Mark 13:32, He uses the word “that” as in “that day and hour.” In Mark 13, the word “this” (*houtos, hautē, touto*) appears more often in verses 1–13, leading to the destruction of Jerusalem. The word “that” characterizes the latter part of the chapter.**

**Thus, “this generation” most likely refers to the first-century generation, which saw the destruction of Jerusalem, as Mark 13:30 describes. However, Mark 13:32 refers to the second coming of Christ, which is still future and was more distant from the first century. Consequently, Mark 13:32 uses the word “that” to speak of events more distant from the first century.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, September 5.†‡

21. So, what does God tell us to do as we are awaiting that momentous occasion? We are to be constantly awake, alert, and watching.

**Mark 13:32:** “No one knows, however, when that day or hour will come—neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; only the Father knows.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

22. What event was being prophesied by those words? Surely, it must refer to the second coming of Jesus Christ. They were to expect earthquakes, persecution, and trials, even the killing of many; but the second coming would not be then. They were to know that even close family

members might turn against them during those difficult times. But, God's Spirit would always be present. Have you had any serious experiences that might qualify?

23. The New Testament is full of prophecies pointing to the second coming. See, for example:

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:** <sup>13</sup> Our brothers and sisters, we want you to know the truth about those who have died, so that you will not be sad, as are those who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will take back with Jesus those who have died believing in him.

<sup>15</sup> **What we are teaching you now is the Lord's teaching:** we who are alive on the day the Lord comes will not go ahead of those who have died. <sup>16</sup>There will be the shout of command, the archangel's voice, the sound of God's trumpet, and the Lord himself will come down from heaven. Those who have died believing in Christ will rise to life first; <sup>17</sup>then we who are living at that time will be gathered up along with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>So then, encourage one another with these words.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

24. Of course, the book of Revelation has many things to say about the second coming of Jesus. For example, see Revelation 1:7; 6:12-17, and Revelation 14:14-20.

**Revelation 1:7:** Look, he is coming on the clouds! Everyone will see him, including those who pierced him. All peoples on earth will mourn over him. So shall it be!—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

**Revelation 6:12-17:** <sup>12</sup> And I saw the Lamb break open the sixth seal. There was a violent earthquake, and the sun became black like coarse black cloth, and the moon turned completely red like blood. <sup>13</sup>The stars fell down to the earth, like unripe figs falling from the tree when a strong wind shakes it. <sup>14</sup>The sky disappeared like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place. <sup>15</sup>Then the kings of the earth, the rulers and the military chiefs, the rich and the powerful, and all other people, slave and free, hid themselves in caves and under rocks on the mountains. <sup>16</sup>They called out to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the eyes of the one who sits on the throne and from the anger of the Lamb! <sup>17</sup>The terrible day of their anger is here, and who can stand against it?"—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*</sup>

**Revelation 14:14-20:** <sup>14</sup> Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was what looked like a human being, with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. <sup>15</sup>Then another angel came out from the temple and cried out in a loud voice to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "Use your sickle and **reap the harvest**, because the time has come; the earth is ripe for the harvest!" <sup>16</sup>Then the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle on the earth, and the earth's harvest was reaped.

<sup>17</sup> Then I saw another angel come out of the temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

<sup>18</sup> Then another angel, who is in charge of the fire, came from the altar. He shouted in a loud voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sickle, and **cut the grapes from the vineyard of the earth**, because the grapes are ripe!" <sup>19</sup>So the angel swung his sickle on the earth, cut the grapes from the vine, and threw them into the winepress of God's furious anger. <sup>20</sup>The grapes were

squeezed out in the winepress outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress in a flood 300 kilometres [*sic-Br*] long and nearly two metres [*sic-Br*] deep.—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

25. Contrast those verses with Revelation 19:11-21 in which the Bible tells us how God will finally bring the great controversy to an end.

**Revelation 19:11-21:** <sup>11</sup> Then I saw heaven open, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True; it is with justice that he judges and fights his battles. <sup>12</sup>His eyes were like a flame of fire, and he wore many crowns on his head. He had a name written on him, but no one except himself knows what it is. <sup>13</sup>The robe he wore was covered with blood. His name is “The Word of God”. [*sic*] <sup>14</sup>The armies of heaven followed him, riding on white horses and dressed in clean white linen. <sup>15</sup>Out of his mouth came a sharp sword, with which he will defeat the nations. He will rule over them with a rod of iron, and he will trample out the wine in the winepress of the furious anger of the Almighty God. <sup>16</sup>On his robe and on his thigh was written the name: “King of kings and Lord of lords”. [*sic*] ...

<sup>19</sup> Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered to fight against the one who was riding the horse and against his army. <sup>20</sup>The beast was taken prisoner, together with the false prophet who had performed miracles in his presence. (It was by those miracles that he had deceived those who had the mark of the beast and those who had worshipped the image of the beast.) The beast and the false prophet were both thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulphur [*sic*]. <sup>21</sup>Their armies were killed by the sword that comes out of the mouth of the one who was riding the horse; and all the birds ate all they could of their flesh.—*Good News Bible*.\*‡

26. Note that God wants all His children to come to repentance.

**2 Peter 3:3-13:** <sup>3</sup>First of all, you must understand that in these last days some people will appear whose lives are controlled by their own lusts. They will mock you <sup>4</sup>and will ask, “He promised to come, didn’t he? Where is he? Our ancestors have already died, but everything is still the same as it was since the creation of the world!” <sup>5</sup>They purposely ignore the fact that long ago God gave a command, and the heavens and earth were created. The earth was formed out of water and by water, <sup>6</sup>and it was also by water, the water of the flood, that the old world was destroyed. <sup>7</sup>But the heavens and the earth that now exist are being preserved by the same command of God, in order to be destroyed by fire. They are being kept for the day when godless people will be judged and destroyed.

<sup>8</sup> But do not forget one thing, my dear friends! There is no difference in the Lord’s sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.

<sup>10</sup> But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. <sup>11</sup>Since all these things will be

destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be? Your lives should be holy and dedicated to God, <sup>12</sup>as you wait for the Day of God and do your best to make it come soon — the Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat. <sup>13</sup>But we wait for what God has promised: new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home.—*Good News Bible*.\*

27. Near the end of His life on this earth, do you think Jesus actually saw a vision of things that had not yet happened on this earth? Absolutely. Did He see our days?
28. Do you think that some of the signs that Jesus mentioned in Mark 13, Luke 21, and Matthew 24 are taking place around us in the world today? What should that teach us?
29. Think of all God's faithful people who have died. **The next thing they will see is Jesus, coming in the clouds of heaven! What a marvelous awakening! Mark 13, Luke 21, and Matthew 24 are often linked together as a description of eschatology.**
30. What is *eschatology*? *Eschatos* in Greek means *last day* or *end events*. Notice this definition from Goodman's dictionary

[BSG:] *Eerdmans Dictionary* states that "eschatology (from Gk. *éschatos*, "last") concerns expectations of an end time, whether the close of history, the world itself, or the present age."—John T. Carroll, "Eschatology," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), p. 420.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 132.†§

31. **Eschatology means nothing unless you believe that God has the power to predict future events far in advance.** There are many long-term and many short-term predictions in the Bible, all of which have been fulfilled except for those predictions directly connected to the second coming of Jesus. The 70-week prophecy, specifically targeting the period of time allotted to the Jewish nation as a nation, was fulfilled exactly as predicted in A.D. 27, A.D. 31, and A.D. 34. The baptism of Jesus, His death on the cross, and the stoning of Stephen with the gospel rapidly spreading to Gentiles in the Mediterranean world fulfilled the prediction in that final week of the 70-week prophecy.
32. It is important for us to remember the lessons we should have learned from Isaiah 40-55. The two great features that identify the one true God from all pretenders are: (1) God's ability to create out of nothing; and (2) His ability to predict events far in advance. No pretend "god" can do either of those things.
33. Prophecy also forms a very important provision for God's faithful people. It gives some hints about what is coming. Some of God's prophecies were given specific time periods and came to pass, just as predicted. However, we have not been given—and Jesus told us we would not be given—a specific date for the second coming. This was connected with many warnings from Jesus to watch and not be taken by surprise. Summarizing:

**Mark 13:9-37:** <sup>9</sup> "You yourselves must be on guard. **You will be arrested and taken to court. You will be beaten in the synagogues; you will stand before rulers and kings for my sake to tell them the Good News....**

<sup>23</sup> "Be on your guard! I have told you everything before the time comes....

<sup>28</sup> "Let the **fig tree** teach you a lesson. When its branches become green and

tender and it starts putting out leaves, you know that summer is near....

<sup>33</sup> “Be on watch, be alert, for you do not know when the time will come.... <sup>35</sup> Be on guard, then, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming — it might be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or at sunrise.... <sup>37</sup> What I say to you, then, I say to all: watch!”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

34. Jesus warned the disciples of both the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming.

[EGW:] ... As He warned His disciples of Jerusalem’s destruction, giving them a sign of the approaching ruin, that they might make their escape; so He has warned the world of the day of final destruction and has given them tokens of its approach, that all who will may flee from the wrath to come.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 37.2.‡

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35. After talking about the destruction of the temple, Jesus said that many will come claiming to be Christ or claiming to be prophets before the great and final day of this earth’s history.

**Mark 13:5-13:** <sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, “Be on guard, and don’t let anyone deceive you. <sup>6</sup>Many men, claiming to speak for me, will come and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will deceive many people. <sup>7</sup>And don’t be troubled when you hear the noise of battles close by and news of battles far away. Such things must happen, but they do not mean that the end has come. <sup>8</sup>Countries will fight each other; kingdoms will attack one another. There will be earthquakes everywhere, and there will be famines. These things are like the first pains of childbirth.

<sup>9</sup> “You yourselves must be on guard. You will be arrested and taken to court. You will be beaten in the synagogues; you will stand before rulers and kings for my sake to tell them the Good News. <sup>10</sup>But before the end comes, the gospel must be preached to all peoples. <sup>11</sup>And when you are arrested and taken to court, do not worry beforehand about what you are going to say; **when the time comes, say whatever is then given to you. For the words you speak will not be yours; they will come from the Holy Spirit.** <sup>12</sup>Men will hand over their own brothers to be put to death, and fathers will do the same to their children. Children will turn against their parents and have them put to death. <sup>13</sup>Everyone will hate you because of me. But whoever holds out to the end will be saved.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

36. Repeatedly, Seventh-day Adventists have pointed out the importance of the dark day and the moon turning to blood in 1780, as well as the falling of the stars in 1833 as heaven-ordained events linked to the time of the end.

**Mark 13:24:** “In the days after that time of trouble the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

37. Remembering what had been written in Matthew 24 and Mark 13 when these events took place, many Bible-believing Christians took notice. And then when the Pope was taken captive (1798) and the power of the Roman Catholic Church was depleted for a time, it seemed clear to them that the second coming was just around the corner.

38. **Mark 13:20-23** give us a promise that God will not allow His faithful people to be completely wiped out. He would protect them by shortening the days of persecution. Logically, this seems to fit with the idea that **as the Reformation expanded, Roman authority was diminished.**

But, Jesus went on to say in Mark 13:21-23 that a time was coming when false prophets and false christs would arise. And then, He described the time when that would take place.

39. Mark 13 talks about other events, events even worse than the destruction of Jerusalem. Was Jesus referring to His second coming and also earlier events of persecution in the Dark Ages?

**Mark 13:19:** “For the trouble of those days will be far worse than any the world has ever known from the very beginning when God created the world until the present time. Nor will there ever be anything like it again.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

[EGW:] The Saviour’s [sic] prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is **to have another fulfillment**, of which that terrible desolation was but a faint shadow. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God’s mercy and trampled upon His law. Dark are the records of human misery that earth has witnessed during its long centuries of crime.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 36.2.\*†

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.151&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.151&index=0)†

40. As we have concluded, Mark 13:14 discusses the fulfillment of the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9. Of course, Daniel 9 is linked to the prophecies of Daniel 7&8 and the little horn power which persecuted the people of God for 1260 days/years. (See Daniel 7:25.) Historically, that time of persecution can be linked to the dates A.D. 538 to 1798. During that time, often referred to as the Dark Ages, the domination of Western Europe by the Roman Catholic Church was nearly total and was terrible. Millions of people died because of their beliefs. Anyone who did not obey or agree with the Roman Catholic power was subject to persecution or even death. But, that was not the worst of what was coming.
41. Couldn’t God have protected His faithful people down through the Dark Ages? Why didn’t He? Or, did He? Consider the stories of the Waldenses, the pilgrims, and the Puritans.
42. **We may never know this side of the kingdom**, exactly why Jesus mixed events connected to the destruction of Jerusalem with events describing the final history of our world and/or the hardships and persecution of God’s people at other times.
43. Mark 13 ends with the important words of Jesus found in Mark 13:37 of the *New American Standard Bible*\* (2020): “ ‘What I say to you I say to all: “Stay alert!” ’ ”
44. Does it seem to you that people in your church are fully prepared for the second coming of Jesus? What about the people in the world around you?

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