

An Interpretative Translation of Mark 13¹

(as we have followed it, cf. previously discussed possible temporal outlines)

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Teacher, look! Aren’t the stones and buildings of the temple magnificent!” In response Jesus replied, “You see these great buildings? [Within your lifetime (13:30) they will be totally destroyed and] not a single stone will remain attached to another! They will all be thrown down!” As Jesus was sitting with his disciples Peter, James, John and Andrew on the Mount of Olives facing the temple, they asked him privately, “Tell us, when will *these things* take place, and what will be the sign preceding all *these things* [that will warn us that the destruction of the temple is about to take place]?”

[In response to the disciples’ twofold question concerning the time of the temple’s destruction and the sign preceding it] Jesus began to say to them, “Be on your guard and do not let anyone deceive you. Many [deceivers] will come claiming to be the Christ and saying, ‘I am the Messiah!’ and they will deceive many people. And whenever you hear reports of wars and rumors of wars do not be alarmed by this! It is necessary that such things take place, but these are not signs of the [imminent destruction and] end [of the temple]. For nations will go to war with other nations and kingdoms will go to war with other kingdoms. There will be earthquakes occurring in various places and famines as well. [These are also not signs of the temple’s imminent destruction.] These are but the beginning of events preceding its destruction [but they are not the sign indicating its imminence].

“But *you*, be on your guard, for they will deliver you over to Jewish courts [for trial] and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will be brought for trial before governors and kings because of your allegiance to me [and this will serve as an opportunity] to bear witness to them. And it is necessary that the gospel be preached first in all the nations [before the temple is destroyed]. And whenever they deliver you over for trial, do not worry beforehand about what you should say, but say whatever God give to you at that hour, for it will not be your words and thoughts that you speak but the words and thoughts that the Holy Spirit has given you! And [things will become so bad that] a brother will even betray his own brother and deliver him over to [trial resulting in his] death, a father will deliver over his own child [to death], and children will rise up against their parents leading to their death! You will be hated by everyone for being my disciples [as I have already told you (8:34-38)], but the one who remains faithful until death, this person will be saved!

“But [concerning the sign you asked about] when you see the abomination of desolation standing [in the temple] where he ought not to be, you who are reading this Gospel make sure that you understand this [in light of the abomination of desolation referred to in the yearly celebration of Hanukkah, the Feast of Lights]. Then you who are in Judea must flee immediately to the mountains! If you are relaxing on the roof of your house, do not come down and enter your house to take anything with you! [Flee while you still can!] If you are working in the field, do not return home to get your coat. [Flee while you still can!] And woe to those poor souls who are pregnant and nursing children in those days [for whom flight is more difficult]! Pray that this does not happen in winter [when flight is more difficult], for those days will bring such tribulation as has never been seen on the earth from the beginning of creation that God created until now and will never be again. And if the Lord did not shorten those days [of tribulation], no one would be saved! But for the sake of his elect, whom he has elected, he has shortened those days. And then if anyone should say to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ’ [or] ‘Look, there [he is],’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But *you* be on your guard! I have told you *all things* beforehand.

¹ Stein, Robert H. 2014. *Jesus, The Temple and the Coming Son of Man: A Commentary on Mark 13*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic.

“But in those days after that terrible tribulation [associated with the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem] God will cause

the sun to become dark,

and the moon not to give its light,

and the stars to fall from heaven,

and the powers of heaven to shake.

And then [the whole world] will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory! Then he will send the angels and gather his elect from the four corners of the earth, from the end of the earth to the end of heaven.

“Learn from the fig tree the following parable: as soon as its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. So likewise, when you see *these things* [in particular the appearance of the abomination of desolation] taking place, you know that it [the destruction of the temple you asked about] is at the very door. I am telling you the truth, this present generation will in no way die off before *all these things* [you asked about] will have taken place! Heaven and earth will pass away, but the words that I have told you will never, ever pass away!

“But now about that day or hour [of the coming of the Son of Man]—no human being knows this. Not even the angels in heaven, nor I, God’s Son, know this. Only the Father knows it! Therefore be on your guard and keep awake, because you do not know the time [of the Son of Man’s coming]. It is like when a man leaves his home on a journey. Before going he gives each of his servants authority for their specific task and commands the doorkeeper to watch [for his return]. You watch therefore for you do not know exactly when the Lord of the house is coming. It may be at evening [6-9 p.m.], midnight [9-12 p.m.], cockcrow [12-3 a.m.], or dawn [3-6 a.m.], and you do not want to be found sleeping when he suddenly comes. What I am saying to you I am saying to all: ‘Watch!’”