

## SIGNS OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

### **TEXT: MARK 13:1-8**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Tonight's message is from the Olivet Discourse (cf. Matt. 24 & 25; Luke 21).
2. The key word here is "sign" (13:4).
3. Many people are looking for signs. And many people are confused over these signs. Personally, I do not think we should be looking for signs, but "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).
4. Some of these verses seem to describe general characteristics of the present age (what we usually call "the church age" – i.e., the period between the first coming and the second coming of Christ).
5. Mark 13:8 says, "These are the beginnings of sorrows" (cf. Scofield margin – "birth pangs").
6. It should be stressed that these signs will characterize the entire period between the first and second coming of Christ, but things will certainly intensify as we get closer to the return of Christ.
7. Mark 13:5-8 are general characteristics of the entire age, and then Mark 13:9-27 give warnings regarding the tribulation period.
8. The two sections are separated at the end of verse 8 – "these are the beginnings of sorrows."
9. The order of these predicted events in the Olivet Discourse is climactic and increases in intensity, culminating in the second coming of Christ (Mark 13:26).
10. The history of the last 2,000 years teaches us that all of these signs have in large measure characterized the entire age, but these same signs will intensify as the age moves on to its conclusion.
11. Everything is moving forward to that great event – the second coming of Christ.
12. As our Lord went out of the temple (13:1; cf. 12:41-44), one of His disciples (we are not told which disciple) said to Him, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" (13:1).
13. Our Lord acknowledged the "great buildings" and then added that they would be "thrown down" (13:2). This was literally fulfilled in AD 70 when Titus and the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem.
14. Only Mark adds Andrew to our Lord's inner circle (13:3).
15. "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" (13:4).

## **I. RELIGIOUS DECEPTION (13:5, 6).**

1. The first sign mentioned by our Lord is religious deception, including false christs (13:5, 6; cf. Luke 21:8; Matt. 24:4, 5).
2. This is a very important sign (cf. II Peter 2; Jude).
3. Our Lord said in Matthew 24:11, “And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”
4. In Luke 21:8, our Lord said, “Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”
5. There are many false teachers and false prophets who teach “in the name” of Jesus (Mark 13:6). Many religious people are misled by these false teachers.
6. Some people do not like it when a pastor preachers against false teachers, but we have a responsibility to protect the sheep from dangerous wolves.
7. Our Lord said in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”
8. Paul said in Acts 20:29, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”
9. Religious deception has always been a problem, and it will get far worse as we draw closer to the second coming of Christ (cf. Rev. 13).

## **II. WARS & RUMOURS OF WARS (13:7, 8a).**

1. The history of mankind has been written in blood. Every day we hear about wars and rumours of wars (cf. Matt. 24:6, 7).
2. Luke 21:9 says, “But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.”
3. “Commutations” – like bombs going off in Times Square. Or on a subway. Or terrorists hijacking airplanes and flying them into buildings.
4. Our Lord said to expect these commotions, but “be not terrified.”

## **III. EARTHQUAKES IN DIVERS PLACES (13:8)**

1. Our Lord said other signs will include earthquakes in divers places (cf. Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11), famines (cf. Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11),

pestilences (cf. Matt. 24:7; Luke 21:11), and “fearful sights” (Luke 21:11).

2. Many of our members lost friends and relatives in the recent earthquake in Haiti. Then that was followed by a major earthquake in Chile.
3. The Newsbusters web site for April 4, 2010 said this: “There have been 217 earthquakes in the last week around the world as of this posting and more happening by the minute. 21 in the last 24 hours and 3 in the last four minutes.”
4. Our government has a earthquake update web site called “Earthquake Hazards Program” with a lot of information on recent earthquakes.
5. Just one week ago, on May 1, 2010, there were earthquakes in the Northern Mariana Islands (in the western Pacific Ocean), in India, Chile, in Indonesia, in the South Sandwich Islands (southern Atlantic Ocean), in the Bering Sea, in Alaska, off the coast of Japan, in Tajikistan (north of Afghanistan), and in Vanuatu (an island nation located in the South Pacific Ocean).
6. That was all in one day!
7. Our Lord said in Mark 13:8 that, “These are the beginnings of sorrows.” In other words, these are to be succeeded by far worse and more startling conditions before the Lord returns in judgment to set up His kingdom.
10. Religious persecution, including martyrdom, is another sign given by our Lord (Mark 13:9; cf. Luke 21:12-19; Matt. 24:9, 10; Rev. 6:9-11).
11. There is an interesting connection between the seal judgments and the signs given by our Lord in the Olivet Discourse. This sign follows that sequence and lines up with the fifth seal.
12. It is difficult for many Americans to comprehend this because we have enjoyed religious freedom in America. However, it is no secret that millions of Christians are being persecuted in Muslim and communist countries. Also, there is still persecution against true Christians in many RC countries, though not as bad as it was during the Inquisition.
13. But according to Bible prophecy, persecution against Christians will get worse and worse during the tribulation and we can expect to see much more of it here in America (cf. Rev. 13:15-18; 20:4).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. Two judgments are taught in the Olivet Discourse – one near (AD 70) and one far.
2. Most of these prophecies will be fulfilled at the end of this age as we get closer to the second coming of Christ.
3. These two judgments – near and far – are distinguished in Luke's account (cf. Luke 21:12, 24; Scofield's notes on bottom of p. 1106).