



Mark 13

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Tape #8041
By Chuck Smith

As we mentioned this morning, Mark's gospel is more or less an abbreviated version of the gospel and in the thirteenth chapter, we find this abbreviated version of what is often called the Olivet discourse that was prompted by the disciples' questions concerning the signs of the destruction of the temple and the sign of the coming of the Lord and the end of the age. And so Jesus gave to His disciples signs that would indicate the time of the destruction of the temple, He gave to them signs of His coming again, and of the end of this age of Gentile rule that would precede the glorious kingdom age, the establishing of God's kingdom upon the earth. So Mark tells us,

As he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here (13:1)!

Josephus probably gives us the best description of the temple. It is interesting that nothing really very much is made out of the greatness of the temple, its building. We do know that Jesus came to the temple. He, on two occasions, drove out those that were merchandising and making it sort of a bazaar, changing money and selling sacrificial animals within the temple precincts. He did call it His Father's house. When they first were asking for a sign, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it again" (John 2:19). And they made fun of the fact that they had been forty-six years in the construction and You say You're going to build it in three days. And so "He was talking," we are told, "of the temple of His body" (John 2:21).

According to Josephus, between the years 19 and 20 B.C., Herod had began the construction of the temple. When he first made mention of his plans to build the temple, there was a negative reaction among the Jews. Some thought that he was just attempting to destroy the temple that had been built by Zerubbabel, when they return from their captivity, and they thought that he would never finish the project of the new temple. So he gave a speech to the people and he more or less in the speech outlined his plan to build this tremendous monument, it would be greater than any building that existed. At that time, you had the great temples in Ephesus, the great temples in Athens, Greece, but this was to exceed them all in glorious magnificence. He was wanting this to be the crowning achievement of his life. He wanted this to be the monument that would forever mark him in the annals of the history of man. This was to be his great building and that in years to come, Herod the great would always be remembered because of this vast temple complex that he built there in Jerusalem. To allay their fears that it would not be completed, he said that he would gather all of the materials before they would actually begin the project of building the temple. And the first thing they did, of course, was to enlarge the temple mount area by building this huge retaining wall.

In the Tyropian valley, the retaining wall was some 250 feet high above the bottom of the Tyropian valley. They had this massive bridge, fifty feet wide, that came across the Tyropian valley, those in the upper city of Jerusalem could come across this massive bridge of which part of it still exists to the present day. When you go to the temple mount area, you will go up to the western wall and into the gate, to the left there, and you'll see this tremendous arch in there which was one of the arches of this bridge that crossed the Tyropian valley some 300 feet long and the people in the upper part of Jerusalem could come across the bridge to the temple without going down into the valley and back up again. The top of the bridge was 250 feet above the valley floor. So it's just absolutely mind boggling when you're there and you see the huge stones that they used just to build the bridge, the huge stones that they used to build this retaining wall around the southern part of the temple mount area and the eastern part in order to enlarge the area of the temple courtyards, and it was not just the temple itself but there were many other buildings built in conjunction with the temple; colonnades, porches and just magnificent buildings surrounding the temple.

The temple itself according to Josephus was a hundred and twenty cubits high which would be about a hundred and eighty feet which would be about the height of an eighteen-story building. So it was quite

mammoth in size. According to Josephus, some of the stones that were used in the lower level of the building of the temple were forty feet long and twelve feet high and eighteen feet thick. Some of the historians believe that he was guilty of hyperbole, that he's exaggerating it a bit, but in the excavations along the western wall, the temple mount area, or the retaining wall, the western wall, up towards the fortress of Antonio, I stepped off one stone that was forty-seven feet long. I don't know the thickness of it but was about six to seven feet high. It's estimated that it weighs somewhere around a hundred and sixty to a hundred and eighty tons. And so, Herod was really going to put it all into this temple, it was to be a monument unto Herod throughout generations. God had other ideas.

The disciple was remarking to Jesus about the stones, these huge stones that Herod used and about the great building itself with its beautiful gates covered with plates of gold and the golden grates on the gates that glistened in the morning sunlight so much so that you really couldn't look at them. It was like looking at the sun, the reflection. And when the disciple was pointing out these huge great buildings, the temple, the porticoes, the colonnades,

Jesus said unto them, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down (13:2).

And that must have seemed to be one of the most impractical things that Jesus ever said. How in the world could anyone ever destroy such a magnificent structure, such a huge structure as the temple. And yet here is this amazing prediction by Jesus, "not one stone will be left standing upon another." When a person makes predictions, it is easy to find out whether or not they are true or false prophet and that is, does it come to pass? And if it doesn't come to pass, then it's very obvious they are a false prophet. If it comes to pass, then there are other tests that you should put before you're ready to accept them as a true prophet but, what are they teaching you to believe and trust in for your salvation? But here was an amazing prediction and one that will establish whether or not Jesus is a true or a false prophet.

They were leaving the temple area, they went through the Kidron valley over to the Mount of Olives and there was a place that Jesus was accustomed to, more or less, stay on the Mount of Olives with His disciples and we are told here that it was over against the temple. That is, they had a view of the temple from the place where they were sitting there at the Mount of Olives. From the Mount of Olives, you have a great view into the temple area, especially from the middle portion of the Mount of Olives, there's a path that comes down and you get a grand view of the whole temple area, the large temple mount area and the buildings.

And so Jesus was over there where they could look back down onto the temple mount, [the temple and the buildings that were there], Peter and James and John and Andrew, [that is the brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John] they came to Jesus privately and they said, Lord tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all of these things shall be fulfilled (13:3,4)?

Matthew tells us that they were asking for the signs of His coming again and the end of the age. But when shall these things be? When shall this destruction of the temple take place? So in this Olivet discourse, you have actually prophecies that deal with the signs of the destruction of the temple. And then you have prophecies that deal with the signs of His coming and of the end of the Gentile age. And as I said, Matthew and Luke give to us fuller accounts of this Olivet discourse.

So Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you (13:5):

One of the signs would be false Messiahs, false christs, deception.

For many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ [or the Messiah, the Anointed One]; and shall deceive many (13:6).

I've often said that it is tragic what men will believe who have rejected the truth of Jesus Christ. If you want to just set yourself up as a sucker to believe anything, then just don't believe in Jesus. I look at these people who have rejected the knowledge of Jesus Christ. I look at the Hare Krishnas. I see them in their saffron robes, I see them with their finger symbols and their shaved heads and I see them as they are dancing on the streets and so forth, and I think what a tragedy, what foolish things people will believe who reject the truth of Jesus Christ. And the Lord sort of said that. In 2 Thessalonians, He said that "because they would not receive the knowledge of the truth, God gave them over to a strong delusion, that they would believe a lie:" rather than the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:11). You see people who are following after men who proclaim

themselves to be Messiah. Take the case of Koresh there in Waco, Texas. Take Jimmy Jones in Ghana. And just more recently this past week, the suicides of the people that were following this supposed charismatic leader and looks like maybe there was murder and suicides. But the things that people will believe when they reject the truth of God. God just gives them over to a delusion because they don't want the knowledge of the truth, God will allow them then to be gullible and to believe all kinds of fanciful nothings. And so, Jesus warns first of those false religious systems that would proliferate.

And when you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, don't be troubled: for these things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet (13:7).

In other words, man has not, does not, and will not learn to live together in peace. How the idealist has so long advocated, hoped for, dreamed of a peaceful world. And how they sought to bring to pass treaties that would bring peace to earth, and of course, development of the league of nations and more recently, the United Nations and trying to establish a world type of government so that we can create world peace. But just look at our world today. Look at how troubled we are. Wars and rumors of wars, and right now rumors of wars again. But Jesus said those things are going to happen. The world, and I hate to explode any of your, no I don't hate it, I like to burst your bubbles that are false, no sense living in an illusion or being deluded into thinking, everyday and in every way the world is getting better and better and better. I had a grandmother who used to tell me that. And it's not happening, it's not going to happen. The world is going to get worse and worse, according to the scriptures. Evil days shall wax worse and worse, was spoken of the last days, "perilous times will come because men will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1,4).

And all of the consequences of man giving himself over to the flesh and the lust of the flesh until it becomes like it was in the days of Noah, when everyone was doing that which was right in his own eyes. So don't live under a false illusion of thinking that we're on the verge of world peace. In fact, Paul said, "When they begin to say, Peace and safety; then come sudden destruction" (1 Thessalonians 5:3). So watch out for that peace cry. Jesus said, "You'll hear of wars and rumors of wars" and that's going to go on and has gone on and shall go on until the Lord does come.

For nation shall rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom: and there will be earthquakes in divers places, there shall be famines and troubles: and these are just the beginnings of sorrows (13:8).

That is, the nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes in diverse places, famines and pestilences. And of course, we are seeing our share of these things today, the beginning of sorrows. And so,

Take heed to yourselves (13:9):

He is telling now the disciples the things that are going to be happening to them. This is prior to the destruction of the temple.

they are going to deliver you up to the councils; and to the synagogues and you will be beaten: and you will be brought before the rulers and the kings for my sake, for a testimony against them (13:9).

So He's saying, it's not going to be easy to be my disciple, to follow Me. You're going to be persecuted. They're going to bring you before the religious councils. They're going to bring you before the rulers. They're going to beat you. And all of these will be done for my sake. And so we do read in Acts the fourth chapter when Peter and John were beaten and commanded not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus. They went their way rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer persecution for Jesus Christ. No doubt remembering these words of Jesus as they were being beaten. Thought, yes, the Lord told us. He's a prophet, here it is.

So the gospel must first be published among all nations (13:10).

There are many mission groups that have taken this passage of scripture as their main impetus for their foreign mission programs. Jesus said the gospel will be preached in all the world and then shall the end come. And it is the commission of the church to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. That is the commission Jesus gave to His disciples, to the church. And it is thrilling today to me to see how that so many of the churches have developed a vision for world missions and how many Calvary Chapel missionaries we have serving the Lord all over the world tonight. Just how the Lord is going to accomplish this feat of the Gospel being published or preached into all the world is not fully known. Surely

satellite communication opens up a broad new field of getting the Gospel into all the world.

This past week we were approached by a religious broadcasting group who have a large 250,000 watt short-wave transmitter and antennas that are beamed towards Mexico and South America and offering to turn these over to us for a radio ministry that would reach Mexico and South America. And we are presently praying about it, looking for property in Idaho to relocate the transmitter and tower because it will be necessary to relocate them. But the opportunity of getting the Gospel out through radio, we of course are going on satellite within just a few days now. We put up a test signal this past week onto the satellite and we will, actually, we don't have our stations set up for it yet but it can be received on these antennas that people have around the country especially those that live up in the remote areas and we already had some calls from people who picked up the signal off of the satellite dishes. And so it's interesting and we're moving in this direction in another way by which we can expand the preaching of the Gospel. Mexico does not allow religious broadcasting per se. But with the short-wave, we can pop right in to Mexico and the government can't stop it. We just bounce the signal off the ionosphere and it just blankets Mexico. So there are many opportunities of getting the Gospel into all the world.

We do know that in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Revelation, during the great tribulation period, there will be "angels who will be flying through the midst of heaven bearing the everlasting Gospel" (Revelation 14:6). So maybe Jesus was referring to the angels carrying the message and this will precede and then shall the end come. God is faithful and I believe that God is giving one final witness to the world. I believe that "God is not willing that any should perish, that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), and that final witness to the world, the opportunity of men to believe or to reject Jesus Christ. So one of the signs of the last days, the Gospel first published among all nations.

But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up [that is, before the councils], don't take any thought beforehand what you will speak, neither premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak: for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit (13:11).

So Jesus is saying you don't have to worry about your defense, the Holy Spirit will just give you the words to speak and you see classic examples of that when Paul was arrested and brought before the magistrates, how the Holy Spirit inspired Paul's testimony to them. You see it in the case of Stephen, where he was brought before the council and how the Holy Spirit gave him that masterpiece of a sermon.

Now the brother shall betray brother to death, the father the son; children will rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (13:12,13).

So it's not going to be easy, it's going to be hard. You're going to be lights in a dark world but the world doesn't want the light. You're going to be salt to preserve the world from rotting but they don't want that preservation. They're going to hate you, you're going to be persecuted for My sake. And even your own family members may turn against you and deliver you up to the judges.

But when you shall see the abomination of desolation (13:14),

Now we go leapfrog into the signs of the return of Jesus Christ to the earth in power and glory. "When you will see the abomination of desolation"

spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (13:14),

Matthew says "standing in the holy place". The book of Daniel chapter nine speaks of the abomination of desolation and it again is referred to later on in the book of Daniel and from what Daniel says, we know that the abomination of desolation is the desecration of the rebuilt temple by the antichrist. Now it would appear that when the antichrist comes into power, that he will make a covenant with the nation of Israel, a covenant for seven years. And in the covenant it would appear that he does grant to them the permission to rebuild their temple. And of course, this is on the heart of so many Jews today. They are looking for their Messiah because of the nation being birthed again, they are many of them looking for their Messiah. They believe that they will be able to recognize their Messiah who they say will be a man, they will recognize him because he will lead them in the rebuilding of their temple. He will be the one that will bring them their temple. And so it would appear from Daniel that this covenant will be made with Israel by this man of sin, the antichrist and probably in that covenant, grant them the privilege of rebuilding their temple on the

northern portion of the temple mount site in Jerusalem, probably putting a wall next to the dome of the rock mosque and then reserving the whole northern side for the Jews to have their religious center and the Moslems can keep the southern side which they have the dome of the rock and the Al Aqsa mosque.

It is interesting that when John measures the temple that is to be built, the Lord commands him not to measure the outer court because it's been given to the Gentiles. In the new temple that Ezekiel saw, there was a wall that was built around it to separate the holy place from the profane. And so it would appear that there will be a covenant made with Israel allowing them to rebuild their temple without actually creating a jihad with the Moslems. And in the midst of the seven-year period, three-and-a-half years into the covenant, he will come to Jerusalem and he will stop the daily sacrifices and the daily prayers and he will stand there in the temple of God, according to Second Thessalonians chapter two, showing that he is God and demands to be worshipped as God. That is the abomination which Daniel said causes the desolation. That is the final affront of man against God.

At this point, the wrath of God's indignation will overflow and will begin the three-and-a-half years of the great tribulation period of which the Bible speaks. So this great tribulation period of three-and-a-half years will precede the return of Jesus Christ in glory. He will come at the end of this great tribulation period. In fact, he will come 1,390 days after the profaning of the temple, after this abomination that causes desolation, according to Daniel chapter twelve.

"So when you see this abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing where it ought not," that is, standing in the holy of holies of the new temple,

(let him that reads understand,) (13:14)

so you're under the command of the Lord when you read this, you need to understand it. and to understand it, you need to go back to Daniel chapter nine and on through to the end of the book of Daniel to get understanding of this abomination which causes the great desolation.

then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains (13:14):

According to the book of Revelation chapter twelve, God will give to the nation of Israel, to the woman wings of an eagle to bear her to the wilderness place where she will be nourished for three-and-a-half years, time, times and a half time, the three-and-a-half years in which God will preserve them in this place in the wilderness that God has set for them. And so this is the time to flee when you see this abomination of desolation.

Let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house (13:15):

In other words, post haste, get out of here fast.

Let him that is in the field not even go back to his house to get his garment. And woe to those that have little children, and to those that are nursing in those days (13:16,17)!

Going to be days of great hardship.

And pray that your flight will not be in the winter. For in those days there shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of creation (13:18,19)

These are going to be the hardest days that man has experienced upon this globe we call the planet. Days of turmoil, days of strife, days of cataclysmic judgments, of divine wrath and is unparalleled in the history of man. Even greater than the flood of Noah, greater than the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. And so "in those days, there shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of creation,"

which God created unto this time, and neither shall be (13:19).

This is it, this will be the place in history, nothing ever again like this, nothing has ever been like this.

And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days (13:20).

The phrase "no flesh would be saved," it is interesting that in some of the latest weapons that are developed are what are called dirty bombs, nuclear bombs that have extremely intensive radioactive fallout. These bombs are designed not to destroy the buildings, the material things, they only destroy the human body by ultra-radiation. And this ultra-radiation causes running ulcers and a person, the flesh is just eaten away. God described interestingly enough in Zechariah the manner by which those who came against

Jerusalem were to be destroyed and as the Lord describes the method by which they were to be destroyed, it sounds very much like radioactive kind of burns that the people would receive. “And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes will consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth” (Zechariah 14:12). Of course we now have a new virus that is a flesh-eating virus. And so, no flesh would remain, an interesting choice of words.

And then if a man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; don't believe him: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take heed: because I have foretold all of these things. [Told you in advance.] But in those days, after the tribulation [the end], the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken (13:21-25).

Isaiah speaks of this event in the sixteenth chapter. Joel speaks of this in chapters two and three. Amos speaks of this, the days when the sun doesn't shine, the moon doesn't give her light and a tremendous meteorite shower is upon the earth, powers of heaven shaken. Actually Isaiah describes “the earth reeling to and fro like a drunken man, being moved out of its place” (Isaiah 24:20). Great cataclysmic events.

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory (13:26).

So the signs of His coming. This great tribulation period climaxing in these spectacular cataclysmic heavenly events, the sun not shining, the moon not shining, and the tremendous meteorite showers. And then “Jesus coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven (13:27).

His elect here are the Jews, not the church. Isaiah chapter eleven, verse twelve is no doubt the passage that Jesus is referencing here when He talks about His coming and this gathering together from the ends of the earth. “He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isaiah 11:12). And so it's a reference to Israel.

There are those that say it's the church and thus they put the church in the great tribulation period. But those who say that God is through with Israel, that the church is Israel, have such a messed up prophetic view that it's hopeless. And it's dangerous to say that God is through with the nation of Israel. God said that as long as there is day and night He will not forget His covenant with the nation of Israel. So if the sun comes up tomorrow, God's covenant is still standing with Israel. And don't rule Israel out, God is not and will not break His covenant with the nation. He's going to take them through some heavy experiences but yet He has made His covenant and His promises to them and they are, the church does not replace Israel. We have our own place in our relationship to God through Jesus Christ. But Israel also has its place and God is going to yet deal with them, He's got a seven-year covenant to yet be fulfilled with the nation of Israel. So “then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds in great glory and He will send His angels and gather them.”

Now learn a parable of the fig tree (13:28);

In the Old Testament, the fig tree has been used as a symbol of the nation of Israel. God cried through the prophet, “They have barked my fig tree,” as He spoke of the destruction of Israel. In the book of Jeremiah, God likened Israel to a basket of figs, rotten figs that were so rotten that they had to be thrown out. Jesus in the cursing of the fig tree, there was a symbolism involved. It was a tree that didn't bear fruit and thus was cursed and would wither and die. And so with the nation of Israel, because it did not bring forth the fruit that God had desired it was to be cursed, it was to wither and die. But God would bring it back from the grave, Ezekiel chapter thirty-seven. So “learn the parable of the fig tree,”

When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, you know that summer is near (13:28):

So the fig tree in the springtime begins to put forth the green leaves, the new fruit. You know summer is coming, summer is getting close. It's like when you see the signs, the Santa Clauses and the Christmas trees going up, you know that Thanksgiving is close.

And so in like manner when you shall see these things come to pass, know that it's near, even at the doors (13:29).

These are the signs of His return. Just know when you see these things that it is near.

Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled or be done (13:30).

The Greek word here “genea” probably refers to the nation of Israel or the Jewish people, the Jewish genes will not pass 'til all of these things be fulfilled. The remarkable thing is that the Jews have maintained a national identity for almost 2,000 years without a national homeland. And this is unparalleled in the history of man. There has been no other ethnic group of people who have been able to maintain their ethnic identity without a homeland. Usually when a nation has been taken captive, within three or four generations there is a loss of a national identity. And yet here the Jews have maintained their national identity for 2,000 years without a homeland. And so again, if the generation refers to the Jews as a group, it is an amazing prophecy and has been fulfilled.

There are those who say that it is the generation that sees the fig tree bud and thus, the generation that saw the birth of the nation of Israel. That more or less is passing, the generation. I saw the birth of Israel and I'm passing. Those that saw that rebirth, those that were alive in 1948 saw the rebirth of the nation Israel. There are some that interpret that that generation would not pass.

The budding of the fig tree is that the birth of the nation or is it maybe when Jerusalem became again Israeli territory in 1967. Jesus in Luke twenty-one in the same context of the Olivet discourse said that Jerusalem would be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles until the fullness of the Gentiles come in. So in 1967 when Jerusalem again became under the control of the Israel government, completely and fully, the whole city of Jerusalem, did that mark the budding of the fig tree, if the budding of the fig tree indeed be the nation of Israel? So there are several ways to interpret this and not all of them, you can't really discount any. The thing is about prophecy, you really never know for sure until after it's happened. And then you say, Oh yes. And a lot of people have made mistakes in trying to be very dogmatic in their prophetic interpretations and it has oftentimes proved to be wrong.

Heaven and earth will pass away: but my words will not pass away (13:31).

Here are the words of Jesus. Interesting predictions, predictions of the temple being destroyed, it was fulfilled. Prediction of the events that would precede the destruction of the temple, they were fulfilled. Predictions of the things that would be transpiring when He would return again, and we do see such things taking place today. His word would last. It's interesting that we have His word tonight, we're here to study His word. It's been probably, no other book has been subjected to such critical analysis as the Bible. No other book has been attacked as viciously as the Bible. There have been so many people that have set themselves to disprove the Bible. Of course, that's the dangerous thing. If you don't believe the Bible, disprove it. Prove the Bible wrong. I dare you to. But be careful, it's a trap because those that have set out to prove the Bible wrong, so many of them that I know ended up believing the Bible. The internal evidence of inspiration is so strong that I know of so many who set themselves out to disprove the Bible, ended up being very firm believers. So Jesus said His words would not pass away. They haven't passed away, we have them tonight, we're reading them tonight, we're studying them tonight. So another glorious fulfillment of prophecy.

But heaven and earth shall pass away. The earth is in a slow process of passing away. Our universe is in a slow process of fading out. The sun is losing mass, one million two hundred thousand tons of mass per second. Sir Jean said, the great scientist, the earth was like a giant clock, the universe is like a giant clock that was wound up but is slowly running down. The first and second laws of thermodynamics are taking their toll and there is a process of degeneration that is taking place. Of course, the universe is so vast it will take a long time in the natural span for this to happen, but according to the Bible there's going to be cataclysmic things that are going to hasten the end of the universe as such. Heaven and earth will pass but not the word of Jesus, it's eternal. That's why we should put such study and interest in the words of the Lord, they are lasting, they're eternal.

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man (13:32),

That is, the very day and hour that the Lord is coming for His church, nobody knows that. And in the Greek it means, just in the day of hour nobody knows. It's just, that's what He said. You don't know. We

just had another, I don't know what gets into people to try and set, eighty-eight reasons why Jesus is coming in '88. And we had that book and all of these fuss around the country. Have you heard the book? And I had so many people sending me this Wise and Nuts book, turned out not so wise but pretty much of a nut. And he didn't make it. So then he had the audacity to say, Oh I miscalculated it, it's 1989, and got the people, there weren't that many that followed it for 1989.

But even this year, there was another fellow that set this year and he's a pretty prominent fellow and should know better. But I don't know, there's something about date setting that seems to be fascinating and you get a lot of people excited. And then once the day passes, and of course, this goes way back, they've been doing that. At the thousand year, the first millennium there were a lot of them that believed the Lord was coming then. And when the Lord didn't come in the year 1000, they figured out it's because Jerusalem is under the control of the heathens and thus the crusades were to go and free the Holy Land so that the Lord could come. That was the whole impetus behind the crusades. Then 1847, 1857, some fellow back in Zion, Illinois got the people all dressed in white robes and waiting because he had figured out the day that the Lord was coming.

Jehovah Witnesses have had three or four dates that have passed by for the coming of the Lord. But "no man knows the day or the hour," just that's it. In fact,

not even the angels of heaven know that, and not even the Son (13:32),

so if you say the Lord's revealed the day and hour to you, you're pretty special person because He didn't even do that to the Son. Because we don't know the day or the hour, the word of Jesus to us is therefore,

Take heed, watch and pray: for you know not when the time is (13:33).

Because we don't know when the time is, the injunction to us is just watch and pray.

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and he commanded the porter to watch (13:34).

So Jesus is the one who has gone on the far journey, left His church and gave us our duties, appointed us the various duties. But to the porter He said, now watch.

Watch ye therefore: for you know not when the master of the house is coming, whether it will be in the evening, or midnight, or in the early morning, the cockcrowing, or in the morning itself: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch (13:35-37).

So watch. You don't know, we don't know. It could be tonight. I would be thrilled if it were tonight. It could be tomorrow, it could be before the weekend. Watch because we don't know the time of the Lord's return. The important thing is that we are ready and that we are watching.

Father, we thank You for the word of God rich, full, blessed. And Lord, we pray that You will awaken us and stir us unto good works that when You come Lord, You will find us faithful servants watching, ready for Your return. Lord, we pray that we might give all diligence to serving You and to engage ourselves in the things of the Spirit. Not to be caught up in the worldly patterns so that the day catch us unaware. And Lord may we be ready, may we be watching. In Jesus' name, Amen.