

After a challenging couple of days in and out of Jerusalem, Jesus confronts his disciples with a stark reality. The Temple was the center of the Hebrew faith. It was where offerings, sacrifices, and worship occurred. The Temple was also a beautiful place. The entire complex had been expanded over the years with King Herod beautifying and improving the status of the Temple. It was a majestic monument. The Temple will be destroyed, utterly destroyed. This passage is called the Olivet Discourse (Speech given on the Mount of Olives).

**Mark 13:1-2** – One of his disciples draws Jesus' attention to the beauty of the Temple complex. By all human standards, it was wonderful. Remember, Jesus sees things we cannot see, and he is impressed by things that we are not impressed with. Jesus then predicts the Temple's destruction.

What does it mean that Jesus would predict the Temple's destruction? Why would God allow that to happen? What does that mean for the Hebrew people?

The first Temple was built by Solomon on God's direction. The second Temple was built by Ezra /Zerubbabel on God's direction. What could it mean that the second Temple's destruction coincides (roughly) with Jesus' time on earth?

**Mark 13:3-13** – Jesus then talks about signs of the times. Some believe Jesus is speaking to the last moments until he returns. However, the best reading is to understand this passage in historical context. Jesus is answering a question about the Temple's destruction and then also slips in to end of times language as well.

How do we ensure we are not led astray by false teachers? How do we know the difference?

There will be earthquakes, wars, and many other things. It is tempting to think these things will signal the end, but Jesus says, "not yet." These disasters do signal something though. What might these events signal?

If read well, this passage gives us peace. What brings you peace? There are several answers to that question.

### **Mark 13:14-23**

The abomination of desolation is terminology originally used in Daniel 9:27. Daniel predicted a person would come and act as an abomination. Many theologians believe this happened when Antiochus Epiphanies entered the Temple and sacrificed a pig in the Holy of Holies. Jesus resurrects this language when describing the downfall of the Temple. In 66 AD, the Jewish rebels massacred the priests in the Temple (an act of cleansing it in their minds). The Temple was destroyed in 70 AD and prior to its destruction Roman Standards (having the image of Caesar) entered the Holy of Holies. God's judgment had come.

When judgment comes, how should we respond?

How can we know the difference between God's judgment and simply hard times? What should our response be to either situation?

Jesus gives people clear instruction on how to handle the time around the destruction of the Temple. What does this tell us about Jesus?