

The End

As we made the transition from the twentieth century into the twenty-first, it was observed that knowledge double every ten years. I have not heard the latest estimate but from my limited vantage point, I would suggest that the rate of change has increased significantly. Knowledge is nothing more than the accumulation of facts. How we use these facts determine whether the increase in knowledge is helpful to the human race or is a detriment.

For example, When Albert Einstein and others began to develop theories that matter could be converted into energy, the possibility of having a readily available supply of energy for generating electricity was one of the positive benefits. However, it did not take long before this knowledge was used to create weapons of mass destruction. We have seen the acquisition of knowledge used for good as well as evil.

Since Satan was expelled from heaven, he has repeatedly pointed humans toward destructive behavior. Whether it is through scientific applications for weapons or using our normal bodily appetites to extremes that we no longer control our lust. Satan loves for us to operate on our own and not listen to the laws of God.

We may think that we live in evil times and, in fact, we do. However, we need to realize that, as Solomon mentioned, there is nothing new under the sun. If we look to the book of Genesis, we learn that in less than 2000 years humans went from being created “very good” (Genesis 1:31) to what we find in the 6th chapter of Genesis. (Approximately 1656 years)

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.” (Genesis 6:5-7 NASB)

There are at least two lessons we may draw from this text. First, our generation is not unique in devising evil. We do not have that distinction. Second, when humans reach a certain level of depravity, God will end it.

The topic of the end of this world or the end of time is a popular one. We see those rapid changes mentioned earlier and we think: “it can’t go on much longer.” Many books, movies, and sermons point to certain signs that are, in their opinion, indicators of the end being near.

I have loss count of the prophecies that predicted certain dates on which the world would end and or Christ would return. These predictions have marked the history of Christianity since the early days. We even have some who say that Jesus has already returned. Listen to the words of Jesus concerning those.

Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There *He is,*’ do not believe *him*. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. So, if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, *or*, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe *them*. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. (Matthew 24:23-27 NASB)

According to Jesus, His coming will be swift and visible **just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.** Jesus did not say there would be a secret coming. In fact, He said that if someone says this, we are to ignore them.

In the Bible, we catch a glimpse of the end when the dead will be raised from the dead. Daniel is given a brief look toward the end of time in the 12th chapter.

“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.” (Daniel 12:1-4 NASB)

Here, Daniel is given a glimpse of the time when the dead will rise to either **everlasting life** or **disgrace and everlasting contempt**. Leading up to that time will be a time of distress. Notice, too, people will be torn between serving God and not **many will go back and forth**. This will be a time marked by increase in knowledge.

Jesus was nearing the end of His ministry on earth and was sharing with His disciples some prophecies that would help them be ready for the things that would unfold within their lifetime. Let's turn to Mark the 13th chapter as we begin in verse one.

As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down.” (Mark 13:1-2 NASB)

This temple complex that is mentioned by one of the disciples was a grand structure. It covered a large area and was a prominent feature in Jerusalem.

The temple area, including the temple building itself, had been rebuilt by Herod the Great. The courtyard had been greatly enlarged (to about four hundred by five hundred yards) in order to accommodate the large throngs of Jews who came to Jerusalem for the festivals. To accomplish this enlargement, a huge platform had to be erected to compensate for the sharp falling off of the land to the southeast. An enormous retaining wall was built to hold the platform in place. The massive stones used in the construction of this wall may still be seen today. At the southeast corner the temple platform towered two hundred feet above the Kidron Valley.

In addition to the temple building itself, on the platform stood porticoes and cloistered courts flanked by beautiful colonnades. The temple area covered approximately one-sixth of the area of the city of Jerusalem. It was an architectural wonder, and its size and location dominated the ancient city.

So, one of the disciples comments to Jesus about this grand structure and Jesus tells His disciples a prophecy that seems improbable; the temple buildings would be completely destroyed. This prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Roman general Titus. All the buildings on the temple platform, including the temple itself to which the

prophecy refers, were utterly destroyed. So completely were they destroyed that no trace of them remains today. Even their exact location on the temple mount is disputed.

Jesus walks with His disciple to the Mount of Olives and Peter, James, John and Andrew ask Jesus about the coming events.

As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?” (Mark 13:3-4 NASB)

The destruction of the temple and the end of this age are on the disciple’s minds. When will these things happen? Listen as Jesus answers their questions.

And Jesus began to say to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He!*’ and will mislead many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; *those things* must take place; but *that is* not yet the end. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will *also* be famines. These things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs. (Mark 13:5-8 NASB)

The first words out of the mouth of Jesus are: **See to it**. In the KJV those words are **Take heed**. In the NIV, we find **Watch out**. The theme of watchfulness and caution continues throughout this chapter ending with these words: What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’” (Mark 13:37 NASB)

This is a clear indication that admonition is obviously one of Jesus' main concerns. He was warning against false claimants to messiahship. That Jesus said there would be many such false messiahs suggests that his statement should be understood broadly. Although before A.D. 70 few claimed to be the Messiah in the strictest sense, many claimed to have messianic authority. Furthermore, the reference may also look to the time preceding the End. John, in his first letter, mentions these false messiahs or antichrist (1John 2:22 & 1 John 4:3).

The question the four disciples asked Jesus privately not only goes back to his statement made as they were leaving the temple area but actually expands it. The disciples wanted to know when the things Jesus predicted would take place. But they also wanted to know what the sign would be that the predicted events were "all about to be fulfilled." The disciples thought that the destruction of the temple would come at the end of the age (cf. [Mt 24:3](#)). Thus, they wanted a sign, some sure way by which they might know that the destruction of the temple was about to occur and that the end of the age was approaching. But Jesus refused to give them eschatological signs. Throughout his discourse he was more concerned to prepare them by exhortation and warning for the trials that lay ahead than to give them dates and signs.

The other signs; wars, earthquakes, and famine are called the **birth pangs** and are not specific events that allow us to place dates on the End. The clear message from Jesus is we are not to be concerned about the time but we are to be ready regardless of when the end of time occurs. Our end of time occurs when we reach the end of our life on earth. Are we ready to face God? Have we chosen to be followers of Christ? Are we ready for the end? Are we watching and waiting?