

## *We Look for Jesus*

Mark 13:1-8 (November 14, 2021)

### ***Mark 13:1-8***

13As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!” <sup>2</sup>Then Jesus asked him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.”

<sup>3</sup>When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, <sup>4</sup>“Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?” <sup>5</sup>Then Jesus began to say to them, “Beware that no one leads you astray. <sup>6</sup>Many will come in my name and say, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. <sup>7</sup>When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. <sup>8</sup>For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birthpangs.

### ***Historical Context***

Mark 13:3-37, sometimes called the “Little Apocalypse,” describes wars, earthquakes, famines, and nations rising against each other. While it is hard to determine if Mark 13 anticipates the Jewish-Roman War (66-70 CE) or responds to it, these warnings from Jesus anticipate challenges faced by the Jewish community in Palestine with the war and destruction of the Temple. It is easy to imagine these events felt like an end, for those who watched them unfold.

### ***Theme: Whole Life Living***

While our context is radically different from first-century Palestine, our realities have been rapidly changing, from increasing wealth disparity, climate change reaching the “red zone,” and the persistence of COVID-19 cases. It is increasingly challenging to find a foothold in how to respond, what to do, and what will save us, as Simon Dein indicates: “Pandemics indicate the fragility of life and the world, chaos, engender paralyzing anxiety that the world is dissolving, a sense of detachment and raise significant issues of meaning resulting in existential crises.” These crises inspire big questions of who and how we are in the world; they likewise inspire big questions of in whom we believe and the shape that belief takes in practice.

Maybe the stories of life right now are our own “Little Apocalypse” or, at the very least, a sort of end to the “before times.” This precise point is where we all need to hear the Gospel, that God is always about the business of making new futures possible. The good news of Jesus’ presence seems a fiction in the midst of crisis and disaster, but this place is precisely where we need to imagine a different way forward for humanity. Whenever we hear reports of disaster, Mark 13 reminds us to not be led astray by messianic claimants that cannot save us; rather, we look for Jesus.