

Let's open our Bibles this morning to Mark 13:1 as we continue our series of studies through Mark's gospel, which he wrote (as we've told you) as a testimony, really, from Peter. Peter led John Mark to the Lord. He told him about everything he had learned from the Lord when He was here. Mark was so moved by the heart of Jesus of being a Servant. In fact, he builds his whole gospel around Mark 10:45, that "Jesus didn't come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many," and Mark covers that in great detail. You don't find a lot of sermons in Mark; you find a lot of doing - the Lord up early, the Lord up late, not inconvenienced by the questions of the people, not even put off by the attitude of the crowd. He was in such love with the souls of men that He wanted to reach them no matter what. So, that's what Mark's point is in writing.

The final year of Jesus' three and a half years of public ministry were really not spent with crowds as much as with His own twelve. They had ideas about what the Messiah should come to do. They were wrong. And so He wanted to correct their kind of political and worldly expectations and see that He had come to die to redeem man from sin.

By the time you get to Mark 11, Mark, like most of the other gospel writers, spends a good portion - here, a third of his book - writing about the last week and beyond of Jesus' three-and-a-half-year ministry; that Passion Week. And we are given the specifics that took place on each of those days that led up to the crucifixion on Friday morning. Jesus did arrive, it does seem, in Bethany at the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus before that Saturday, and He was anointed for His burial, you remember, with that expensive perfume of Mary's. And Judas complained about it, and Jesus said, "She's preparing Me for My death." Sunday morning saw the Lord present Himself publicly (and prophetically) to the nation as their Messiah, riding into town on a donkey (even as Zechariah had declared); the people singing the Hallel psalms, part of which was, "This is the day the Lord has made," even as Daniel 9 pointed out the very day. But while the people rejoiced, Jesus wept because He realized that they weren't really looking for a Savior. And when the political shine wore off, many of them turned on Him and that very week would be crying out for His blood. On Monday morning, the Lord had seen a fig tree afar off and had cursed the tree because He expected to find fruit on it. He had gone

to cleanse the Temple for the second time in His ministry - once at the beginning, once at the end. Not much had changed. And He had even spoken with some of the Greeks who were told by Jesus that His time was come and that if He was lifted up, He would draw all men to Himself. That's what John tells us in chapter 12:32. On Tuesday morning, they had a discussion around the dead fig tree - about faith and forgiveness and God's plan. And then the rest of Tuesday really was filled with confrontation. The Lord was in the Temple area. There were tens of thousands of people in town for the Passover; hundreds of thousands Josephus would tell you. And there were three different groups, in particular, that came to try to put Jesus in His place and lower Him in the eyes of the people, maybe get Him in trouble with the Romans. And so the Pharisees had come, and the scribes, to question His authority to cleanse the Temple. The Herodians had come with the Pharisees to question Him about taxes. The Sadducees had come with their typical argument about the fact there couldn't be life after death. The Lord had met with a questioning scribe that he came, it seemed, kind of for nefarious reasons to begin with. But having listened to the discussions, his heart had softened, and by the time he was done talking with Jesus, Jesus said, "You're pretty close. You're not far from the kingdom." He then turned to the crowd and warned what most of the scribes were like, and their fleshly desire for honor. Mark covers a little part of it; Matthew, in chapter 23, covers all of it. And then, finally on Tuesday, Jesus called His boys over to watch a woman, a poor widow, who was coming to cast her life savings - two mites - into an offering at a time when no one noticed, and the Lord was so impressed. And after a hard day of confrontation, what a blessing to see this woman in love with God. And the Lord called it out, and He pointed it out to His disciples.

Well, we are now in chapter 13. It is late Tuesday afternoon. Jesus is preparing to leave the Temple for good. He won't be back here, not in a ministry position, so to speak. And, having accomplished His purposes, He's heading back to Bethany, and several of the apostles are speaking with Him, and they stop to ask Him some questions regarding what He said here, early on in chapter 13, and it leads to a long sermon. It's the longest one in Mark. And Mark just covers part of it. Matthew (in chapters 24 and 25) and Luke (in chapter 21) cover it all. But it is a response to the Lord's speaking to them about what the future held for Israel. It is a sermon that gives us lots of information, prophetically. There is near-term fulfillment; there is long-term, still, anticipation of being fulfilled. And Jesus speaks about a couple of things - the end of the Temple, the end of the city, the time of the Great Tribulation (all the way out to His return to rule and reign). We're going to

spend three weeks in chapter 13 but only get started with it (the first thirteen verses) this morning, and then we have Christmas and New Year's. So you'll have to remember what you hear this morning for a couple of weeks, okay, so you can put it all together; or we'll have to review or something.

Verse 1 says this, "Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.'" Now we're not told what prompted the comment from one of the disciples. Perhaps it was a sense of grief that saw Jesus departing for good. He had loved His own. He loved the people. He desired to reach them. Maybe to cheer Him up. We don't even know who asked the question, although verse 3 gives us some names that we might consider. But whatever the motivation was, as they were leaving the Temple, one of the disciples pointed out to Jesus how beautiful the Temple looked. In fact, Luke tells us in chapter 21:5 that they said "how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations," or gifts, if you will. Not hyperbole. Herod had started the restoration of the Temple forty-six years earlier, and they were barely finished in 64 A.D. building it. Six years it stood finished before Titus and the Tenth Legion of the Roman Army would come and destroy it as they overthrew Jerusalem. But at least at the time of Jesus, it was still in progress. But it was the biggest thing going. It took nearly eighty years to build; it took 80,000 slaves to build it. It was put up on thirty-six acres that are flattened on the top of the mountaintop there. There's a retaining wall around it. It comprised one-fifth of the total land mass of ancient Jerusalem. That's how small Jerusalem was at the time. It was a massive building, dominated the landscape. Huge expanse. Nine gates to enter into the place of worship. The main one was of solid brass; gold plates on its domes. Josephus, the Jewish historian, wrote in his War of the Jews that the stones they used to build it (Herod) were 35' long and 12' thick and 12' high. They weighed 400 tons each. They were the size of boxcars. In fact, if you've been to Israel with us, now that they've dug out the Rabbinical Tunnel, you can actually go down to the city walls to the time of Jesus and see these huge stones; unbelievable how they were moved and chiseled and all. But it was an overwhelming sight to see. It was great pride for the Jews. And I think that whoever said this to Him, maybe Jesus' face just showed that He wasn't thrilled. He had come, He had been rejected, He was going to die just in a matter of hours; and yet there was still that animosity and that unwillingness to hear. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11).

But His answer to them, rather than, "Yeah, that's beautiful," left them flabbergasted. On the previous Sunday, a couple of days earlier, the Lord had wept over the city of Jerusalem, and He had said to them, "If you had known, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another" (Luke 19:42-44) He had said the same thing. But no one had really, I think, paid attention. But His words here left them kind of talking to themselves. And Jesus heads out of the Temple area and across the Kidron Valley and climbs back up the Mount of Olives on the other side to go back to the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

Now, the words of Jesus would come to pass with amazing reliability in 70 A.D. In fact, struggling against the zealots who were fighting against Rome - the Romans came into Jerusalem under Titus - Caesar was in the Antonia Fortress (the controlling area on the Temple Mount that the Romans had built to watch out for trouble), and he had said to Titus' army, "Don't destroy the Temple. We want it whole." But because a lot of the Jews had gone in there to hide, a soldier had sent some arrows in that were flaming, the place had caught on fire, the gold domes melted, and Caesar demanded that these soldiers stay and take one stone off of each one and reclaim the gold. So, just as Jesus said, it had taken place. In fact, Josephus writes about it in his War of the Jews in Book 6. It's not an easy book to read, but if you're interested, you can find it there.

But it was Jesus' comment that surprised them. And so by the time that they came, verse 3, to the Mount of Olives (a little bit more than a mile away), across or "opposite the Temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?' " The Mount of Olives, if you sit on the top of it, is about 150' higher than Mount Moriah or Jerusalem, if you will. And you get this beautiful view, and I suspect the sun was setting. It was late Tuesday, as we said. Four disciples - the first four who came to the Lord, actually, to begin to follow Him - now sit together to question Him regarding His comment in verse 2 because it so upset them, or it certainly shocked them. "When will these things be? What will be the sign that these things are fulfilled?" Matthew 24:3 adds, "and of the end of the age." Really, three questions: "When will these things be? What will be the sign of Your coming? What will be the sign of the end of the age?" Now, you should

understand, and it's vital you keep this in mind, that, to the apostles' understanding the destruction of the Temple or the battle over Jerusalem would immediately result in the ruling of the Messiah. To them, it was all one and the same thing. Remember we've spoken for a long time about this last year of Jesus' public ministry, that these guys were all vying for positions of greatness and jobs in His cabinet. Right? They were going to Trump Tower getting interviewed. They wanted a position. They didn't realize that Jesus had come to die. And so the Lord's constantly talking to them about death and about resurrection, and they're just fighting to the last supper about position. They didn't see a first and second coming. It was all kind of together for them. Same thing in regards to these questions. "If the Temple's about to be destroyed, that means You're about to rule. When is that going to happen? When is this age going to be over? When will You come? What can we look for? What should we be watching for?" Because the Temple looked like it was pretty well standing at this point. What they didn't see was there was this immense time gap between God's work through the nation of Israel (all of the Old Testament) to the time Jesus said, "I'm going to take what I've given you and give it to a nation that will bear fruit" (Matthew 21:43). So, between God's dealing with Israel and the Church Age (where God isn't dealing through a nation, He's dealing through God's people; everyone who comes to Him - Jew and Gentile alike), until the day that the church is taken out, and God turns, again, to deal with Israel, there is this huge time gap between His first coming and His second, between His judgment here and then His establishment of the kingdom upon the earth during the Millennium, if you will.

And so, in their current confusion over His declaration that He'd come to die, they felt the same way about this issue. In fact, Luke 19:11, Jesus begins to tell a parable to them, and Luke introduces the parable by saying this, "Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately." And that was the issue. Right? "When? Any day now. What should we be looking for?" Now, you and I know that a lengthy period exists (it still does, the Church Age, this Age of Grace) between God's dealing with Israel as a nation to reach the world and then His dealing with us. If we go back to that Daniel 9 prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel (it is something we went over in detail a couple of months ago), it is God's formula for His dealing with Israel nationally, and when He dies and is cut off, not for Himself, the sixty-nine seven-year periods have been taken care of. But then the clock stops. There is this Age of Grace. When the church is raptured and God is finished, if you will, with the Church Age, God's dealing

through the world and to the world, even during the Great Tribulation, will be through Israel as a nation, through a people that He has chosen. And when He returns a second time, they'll see Him. "They'll look upon Him whom they have pierced" (Zechariah 12:10, John 19:37). It'll be the seventieth week, or that last seven-year period of Daniel. But the disciples don't see that any more than they see His death (they just want Him to rule) and any more than they understood the first and second coming of the Messiah - once to die and rise and save, once to rule and reign. And so their question to Jesus was based on their understanding that the destruction meant the Messiah's reign was imminent.

Jesus' answer, and it covers this entire chapter, focuses on three things. And He goes far beyond their comprehension, gives them general conditions and some very specific things that apply to three different periods. Number one - before the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem and the things they could be experiencing and facing as they headed in that direction; to the (number two) Age of the Church in the sense that we are given descriptions of how the believer will suffer as he waits for the Lord. This isn't an answer to the Jews about Gentiles. It's about God's dealing with them, but yet, in the inference, you find that here's what you're going to be suffering and what you can look forward to as you wait upon the Lord; things you should be careful of. And then, ultimately, (number three) they are fulfilled in the Great Tribulation just prior to Jesus' second coming, as God again begins to deal with His people. So, there is this dualism of prophecy. It's always there in the Bible. There is a primary application, which can be difficult to figure out, but there are these positions along the way where things are partially fulfilled. It'll help you if you stay in the context.

So chapter 13, in its entirety, would say to you and me - just be ready. Right? Be ready, be diligent, be steadfast, watch, be alert. And let's see what the Lord is going to do and when He is going to come. Let Him find us ready.

Well, the rest of what we're going to look at this morning - through verse 13 - has everything to do with this time gap (which the disciples didn't understand). Jesus answered their three questions, these four men, sitting on a Tuesday night on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Temple area. And He began to say this to them, verse 5, " 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am He," and will deceive many.' " The very first words that Jesus uses to address the curiosity of these men is to speak about a future that is going to be a while, and He warns them about the deception (that will come in the interim) of

those who come to pretend to be Him and seek to draw men after themselves. The words "take heed" mean just that. Watch out, be careful, be on guard, be on your toes because there's a spiritual battle, and folks will come to deceive you. The word "deceive," "*planao*," is the word for a planet drifting through the sky. They'll try to just kind of drag you away, if you will, by declaring that they're the Messiah and you should follow them. Don't be fooled by them. But notice that, even in the answer, Jesus speaks of a time gap because it's going to take time for these things to unfold. There's going to be a time of waiting, a time of watching, a time of false teachers and false prophets and false Messiahs, and they're going to come and go, and they're going to try to drag you along with them. Be careful. Watch for Jesus. Don't watch and follow any of these folks.

Well it was certainly true in the early church - as the church began to grow - even before Jerusalem was destroyed. Paul, when he left Ephesus and the elders, there in Acts 20:29, warned them. He said, "I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves." It's always been the bane of the church as we wait for the Lord - false prophets, false teachers, false direction given. We had that Rajneesh guy a few years ago, and Sun Myung Moon, and Jim Jones, and David Koresh; and lately Kanye West has been telling us he's Christ. Well, I don't think he is. Not sure, but.....it's going to be that way in the days of the Great Tribulation. Satan's going to come along with all of his false power and all of his miracles, declaring he's God, that he alone is to be worshipped, and that he and his evil horde will deceive with signs and wonders. It happened to the early church. It is happening today, as the church waits for the Lord to come. It's going to happen in the Great Tribulation, when the church is removed, but those who are remaining are going to be subjected to this lie of the enemy. So, look, we're in a spiritual battle, and we're warned to beware of the counterfeits. But understand that Jesus' answer, primarily, to these men is, "It's going to be a while." "When's it going to happen? Today? Tomorrow?" "It's going to be a while. It's going to take some time." And He will come again. He will conquer the Antichrist. He will rule from Jerusalem. But between now and His coming, this warning is in force. Take heed. Many will come. Many still do. Don't follow just anyone. Know the Scriptures. Wait for Jesus. In fact, it's not really a sign of the end, it's just the conditions as you wait for the Lord to return. It was a sign before 70 A.D. It's a sign for us before the rapture. It'll be a sign to those who find themselves in the Great Tribulation. Those three, if you will.

Verse 7 says, " 'But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for such things must happen, but the end is not yet.' " Again, there'll be sufficient time for wars and rumors of them. At the time that Jesus was speaking this, the Roman Empire had enjoyed a long era of peace, one of the longest in man's history. They clamped down. No one rebelled, for the most part. But a return to war did not signal the end of the age. Recorded history, by the way, tells us that there's only been one year of peace for every thirteen years of war since we started keeping records from 3600 B.C. forward; and that nearly four billion people have been killed in wars. Now Jesus said, "That's just the beginning. It's not yet. So don't take that as a sign." I know oftentimes when wars or rumors of wars come, there's immediately a prophet who predicts the end of the world. Well, maybe not. Bumper stickers that say "End war" don't know human nature very well. It's not a specific sign. It's just Jesus saying, "This is going to go on as you wait. There's a time between now and the time I come to rule and reign, which you're looking for, which you're hoping for. The end is not yet." Luke said in verse 9 of chapter 21, Jesus saying, " 'But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.' " There's a time gap, right? There's a timeframe. War, according to James, is the result of man's sin (James 4:1). And the final war, Armageddon, is coming - when the Lord will return.

The same thing is true for natural disasters and world wars. Notice verse 8, " 'For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows.' " And I would just say to you the whole point of these first thirteen verses is there's a lot going on; it's going to be a difficult time as we wait, but there's a time gap. The Lord is coming. But, in the midst, we suffer many things. Earthquakes everywhere, famines, trouble. Luke adds, in chapter 21:11, the word "pestilence," which is the Greek word for viruses. Interesting. We have Ebola and AIDS and Legionnaires' disease, all "the beginnings of sorrows." It's the word for labor pains. You know, if someone is pregnant and begins to have labor pains, and they go away, the birth can still be some time off, but it's not very far off. And so, as things increase in frequency, so we should maybe expect to find ourselves realizing the nearness of the Lord is there as well because this picture of travail or birth pains is constantly used by the Lord in speaking of these general signs. As they increase, you're closer now; the baby is right around the corner now. Before 70 A.D. (which remember, we said 70 A.D., Church Age, rapture and then the Great Tribulation) Laodicea was destroyed with a huge earthquake. There was

a killer famine in Rome. Vesuvius erupted and buried Pompeii. All happened before 70 A.D. "The beginnings of sorrows." Last year, according to the National Health Association, twenty-one million people died of malnutrition. We have lots of odd diseases. Earthquakes are at an all-time high in occurrence, globally. Talk to people in California - you know about earthquakes. There're some huge ones coming, by the way - in Revelation 6 and 8 and 11 and 16. You'll be in heaven, but they're coming. And wars are everywhere. Luke adds the word "fearful." Mark adds the word "troubles." Great signs will be in the heavens. We'll see a lot of those during the Great Tribulation. Josephus even writes about a comet in the sky for a year before Jerusalem was leveled. But, look, these are all broad-application generalized signs that we can rightly apply before 70 A.D. to our life today as we wait for Jesus to come; and will certainly be fulfilled in those last seven-year periods of the Great Tribulation. And the reason these men are asking the question is they don't see the time spacing. In fact, Luke 21:12 begins with these words, " 'But before all of these things,' " and then it literally, verse-by-verse, gives us what we have in verses 9-13 here; and then proceeds to tell us all of these things.

So verse 9, " 'But watch out for yourselves,' " (very much like verse 5, " 'Take heed, don't be deceived' ") " 'for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.' " Watch out for yourselves! As you wait for the Lord to come, suffering is going to be the lot of the believer. It was especially true for the 1st century saints. It is true in many places in the world today. It will certainly be true for every believer when the church is taken out and the Great Tribulation begins. The book of Acts certainly bears it out that the early church suffered at the hands of the Jews and of the Gentiles. "Delivered up to the council." The word is "Sanhedrin" in Greek, the word "council." "Beaten in the synagogues." That probably doesn't describe you, but it does describe those who are walking with the Lord prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world. "Brought before rulers and kings for My sake." That can happen to this day. Religious and political persecution for the faith. Peter and John were arrested by the Sanhedrin; Stephen was killed by them; James was beheaded by Herod; Paul hunted in every city by the Pharisees, stood trial before Agrippa, stood trial before Felix, stood trial before Festus, stood trial before Nero - all because he loved Jesus. And six million believers dead under ten Roman waves of persecution in the first three centuries. It happened even as the Lord said. It continues to happen today. You happen to live in a place that's pretty

secure for believers, but there're a whole lot of places in the world you can go, and if you speak up for Jesus, you can be in a world of hurt. And yet it is those places that need to hear about Him.

Look, Mark writes (at the end of verse 9 here) that Jesus said it's going to lead to "a testimony to them" for Him. It didn't take long for the Romans to pass a law that eventually made being a Christian a capital offense, and the punishment was burned at the stake or thrown to the lions. Yet, if you look at the early church's growth, they grew as many as two million people a month being added to the church. Couldn't kill them fast enough. Where there's persecution, there's usually great holiness. When there's ease, there's usually little fruit. Unfortunately, we just kind of skate by.

So, how important that the Lord's Word gets out. It has gone out on the blood of the saints, and, like I said, there are many missionaries today that are literally giving their lives as a testimony to Jesus. The death of Stephen was the seed that reached Paul. The word "martyr" is the word for "witness." Sometimes you just have to go the distance. But the end is not yet. These are things that you're going to be going through as you wait for Him to come.

In verse 10, " 'And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations,' " even as Jesus commanded them in Matthew 28:19. Now, look, this is going to be fully accomplished supernaturally. The church is called to go into all the world and preach the gospel. And then there are those kingdom theology people today that will say to you, "Well, the Lord can't come, we haven't reached the whole world yet," which is silly. Because even as you read through the book of Revelation, during that time of the Great Tribulation (when the church has been removed), God will use the Jews again - two witnesses that will do marvelous things, 144,000 JWs (that's Jewish Witnesses), and finally this evangelistic angel who flies through the world, according to Revelation 14, declaring to the world that Jesus is coming - "to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people - 'Fear God and give glory to Him.' " And so the church is obligated to go into all the world, but don't think that our lack of doing so is going to restrict the Lord from coming. But all of the nations will hear, and we realize that, at the end, they will hear supernaturally - the whole world will hear.

In verse 11, Jesus said, " 'But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that

hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.' " So, the Lord makes this promise that, in those situations where you are suffering for your faith - during all of these times, God will give you a specific word to speak. Since this has come about as a witness (verse 9), since God wants to be glorified in your suffering, then you can rely upon Him to speak through you. Don't plan. Just wait upon the Lord. He'll speak. Now this is not a promise to lazy pastors. "I'll just wait till the Lord to speak." No, that's not what it says. You're told to study to show yourself approved (2 Timothy 2:15). But yet Luke (21:14-15) will write, " 'Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.' " Matthew writes (10:18-20), " 'You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.' " And you can find that to be so. Read through the book of Acts. Find Peter (Acts 4), standing before the council when arrested with the healing of a man that is lame, and read the words, "They could say nothing against him." Or of Stephen (Acts 6), when he spoke up, and they said, "They were not able to resist the wisdom that the Holy Spirit had given him." Same for you and me. But it is these generalized signs and promises.

The Lord even saying in verse 12, " 'Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.' " The truth of God will bring division, and the hatred for Jesus will overcome blood and friendship ties. All you have to do is look at Nazi Germany, as families turned in their own as collaborators. You find it happening in Arab countries that are at war today. One day it'll happen during the Great Tribulation as well.

" 'But,' " verse 13, " 'he who endures to the end shall be saved.' " Now, look, Jesus isn't painting a rosy picture of the future. "Follow Me, and the rest will be easy." No. It's difficult in every generation. It was difficult up until 70 A.D., when the Jews were sent packing. It was difficult, and is difficult, for the Church Age today. Heavy words from Jesus, considering that his little buddy, Judas, is sitting nearby, ready to sell Him out. But the point is hang in there till the end. Persevere, man, even when trials seem hard and when they seem too long. Wait on the Lord. He's coming. And I would say to you that Israel being back in the land is

the greatest sign to our generation that we're close because everything else depends upon Israel being in the land. And so it is an awesome prophecy. And they've been there since 1948 - 68 years.

So, is the Lord coming soon? I think so. Everything I see, I'm ready to go. Aren't you? I'm ready. I hope He comes before Christmas. That'll make it easier on everybody, won't it? (Laughing) Can't wait. Maybe He'll come next year. Who knows? But I'll tell you what. The signs and the seasons we know about. The day we don't. But we can get a lot of information in, and we will as we go through this chapter, about specific things that we should be watching for and know about. But to these men, Jesus first said, "Look, it's going to be a while. It's going to be a while." They were even under the impression that Jesus said of John that he could live until the Lord came again, over some comments that He made after the resurrection. It wasn't at all what He said. But the early church said, "Well, John's still alive. The Lord's got to come back before John goes. That's what He said!" There've been a lot of alarmists, you know? "The Lord is coming!" And I don't think there's a better way to live than believing He's coming today because, if you have this hope in you, John says (1 John 3:3), you purify yourself. It's always good to know if the Lord could come back, you want to be doing the right thing when He pops in, don't you? You want to be found doing the right thing. So, there's a time gap, but here we wait.

We'll pick up in verse 14 in three weeks. I'm going to give you a little test when we get back to be sure we're still on the same page.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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