

VOC – August 2015: In the gospel according to Mark we also address this question:

1. Are you expecting Jesus?

Dear Listeners,

Before the Lord Jesus was arrested, condemned, and crucified, He first showed His disciples what all was going to happen with *Jerusalem*, with the *temple*, and with the future of His church and kingdom. In chapter 13 Mark tells us about this and you can imagine how important this was to him. This was the *future* of church and kingdom which the apostles, and Mark's generation, would experience in *their* life time! The Lord Jesus introduces these predictions as He and His disciples are leaving the *temple*. "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" the disciples tell Him. Then Jesus' answer must have *shocked* them: "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down." You can imagine what this meant for those who heard Him: the *temple* that was the *centre* of their life, the *heart* of Israel; that's where *God* dwells with His people! This temple will be *destroyed*? Terrible!

That's when Jesus tells them about the things that will happen after His ascension. First He warns them about the difficult times that will be coming after His departure, times in which *false teachers* will undermine their work while they themselves will be encountering many *troubles* as they enter the *world* with His gospel! Just read the book of the Acts of the Apostles and you can see how these predictions came true. During these first decades of the NT church the *temple* will still be standing there though, and the *Jews* will be thinking and assuming that it's still the house of God. So the Lord Jesus first gives them the *signs* of the times when the end of the temple won't have come yet. Then in 13:14 He foretells them what will happen in *second* instance: those are the events that took place in the years 69/70 A.D. Then the *Romans* invaded the land and destroyed most of it! Yet, the destruction of the *temple* wouldn't be there yet. That was the last and worst ordeal for the Jews: that's when the Romans destroy Jerusalem and burn down the temple completely! That's when Jerusalem and Israel undergo the *judgment* of God in the same way they have seen Babylon and Edom be judged! At least, the Lord Jesus predicts these things using language, images, and signs which the prophets like Isaiah had used for the fall of those *heathen* nations!

These were the things and events that would happen yet during the life of the *apostles*, also in the days that *Mark* experienced the spreading of the gospel in the world. Indeed, that's how they did happen! A famous Jewish priest, general, and historian, *Flavius Josephus*, who witnessed it all, reported it in those same pictures as well! The Roman leaders such as Vespasian and Titus commanded that the whole city should be destroyed, the temple burnt, and the end put to the service in the temple! What horrible experience this must have been for the Jews! Yet, the Lord Jesus tells these things to His disciples in order to show them that at *that* time they will see the work of the Son of Man, His power and authority, established *on the*

earth! “And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth, to the ends of the heavens.” Thus He announces the destruction of the temple not only, but especially the coming of *the dispensation of the Son*, the *gathering of the Church!*

This instruction of the Lord Jesus, dear listeners, is very important therefore for us, for *you* and *me*, today! Jesus Christ will send out His angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens! All the *nations* will hear of Him and will be confronted by Him, until the Lord Jesus returns! “No one knows about *that day or hour*, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father!” And Jesus adds, therefore, “Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know *when* that time will come! Thus Jesus sends His disciples, His apostles, and His servants into the world in order to bring this gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Then the *church* that will be established this way will take this over and *move into the world* in order to tell them about Jesus, about His ministry, His suffering, death, and resurrection! They will call people to *listen* to this proclamation of the gospel, to accept it and believe, and live for Jesus!

That’s how the history of the church has developed, indeed, dear listeners, to the point that we may *now* know the church as spread throughout the *whole world!* The story of the work of *mission* of the church in the world is a marvellous story of Jesus’ servants who went out, bringing the gospel, enduring many hardships and much suffering for Christ’s sake! Yes, *today* as well this gospel is going out, and it is coming to people over the whole world by way of missionaries, via radio and TV, and through the Internet! This is how it is coming to you today as well! That’s what Jesus was thinking of at that time already: how He would gather from among all mankind those whom He has chosen to repent and believe!

So that is also how this message is coming to you, dear listener: upon the command and predictions of Jesus in order that you would hear it via “The Voice of the Church,” and in order that you would come and hear it proclaimed in the *church* from Sunday to Sunday! Remember then also Jesus’ warning: Be on guard! Be alert! “If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you *sleeping*. What I say to you, I say to everyone: “Watch!” May this journey through Mark’s account of the gospel have helped you to see *who Jesus is*, how He works, and how He seeks people to follow Him *by faith*, listen to Him and live for Him *through faith*, and *expect Him* when He returns! I pray that you have heard His call to be alert for that day and that you believe His Word!

Thank you for listening!