

Main Idea: In Mark 13 Jesus made several predictions that we need to know. Specifically, in Mark 13:9-23 He told His disciples to get ready for three inevitable challenges.

- I. The Master says get ready for danger (9-13).
 - A. Jesus identifies the sources.
 1. There will be religious opposition (9a).
 2. There will be political opposition (9b).
 3. There will be family opposition (12).
 4. There will be universal opposition (13).
 - B. Jesus identifies the reason (9, 13).
 - C. Jesus identifies our responsibilities.
 1. We are to be His witnesses (9b-10).
 2. We are to depend on the Holy Spirit (11).
 3. We are to stand firm to the end (13).
 - II. The Master says get ready for desolation (14-20).
 - A. Jesus said Daniel’s prophecy would be fulfilled (14).
 - B. Jesus prepared His followers with practical instructions.
 1. Flee to the mountains (14).
 2. Don’t try to take anything with you (15-17).
 3. Pray it won’t happen in winter (18-19).
 - C. Jesus gave a word of encouragement (20).
 1. The Lord will shorten those days.
 2. The Lord will do this for the sake of His elect.
 - III. The Master says get ready for deception (21-23).
 - A. Jesus warned about false Christs (21).
 - B. Jesus predicted they will perform convincing signs and miracles (22).
 - C. Jesus told His people to be discerning (23).
- One Final Challenge: Get ready for the glory of His second coming (24-26)!

Last week we began a series in Mark 13 called, “Stay Awake: The End Is Coming.” As we prepare to return to Jesus’ Olivet discourse this morning, let’s begin by reading the Old Testament passage that Jesus cites in Mark 13.

Scripture Reading: Daniel 9:20-27

I’ve entitled today’s sermon, “*A Message from the Master about the Future: Get Ready.*” Jesus never said it would be easy to follow Him.

It certainly wasn’t easy for the first and second generation Christians living in the Roman Empire. For instance, in AD 64 the notorious emperor Nero made the followers of Christ the scapegoat for a fire that burned Rome, a fire many believe he himself set for his own entertainment. He tortured many believers, burning them alive to light the night sky in Rome. It’s worth noting that Nero committed suicide four years later when in the face of revolts.

No, He never said it would be easy. It’s not easy for many of our brothers and sisters around the globe in our day either. One Christian dies as a martyr *every three minutes* (that’s 200,000 a year).

How do you encourage someone to follow Christ even though the decision to do so will cost them greatly, possibly their very life? And how do you give hope to followers of Jesus who are suffering for His sake?

Mark faced that assignment around 60 AD. He wrote the Gospel that bears his name, the Gospel of Mark, to encourage a Roman audience to believe in and live for Jesus in

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous message from this passage at WBC, see the Mark series, 9/17/06.

spite of the cost. In his Gospel Mark presented in simple, straight-talk fashion the amazing accomplishments of Jesus. The life of Jesus is so compelling that it speaks for itself. To potentially die for the One who already died for you is no sacrifice, for death was not the end for Him nor will it be for you.

Perhaps one of the most encouraging chapters of Mark's gospel for those facing persecution is the thirteenth chapter. It's here that Mark records Jesus' teaching about impending hardships that would face His followers. It's also here that the Master delivered a prophecy about what would happen *after* the suffering ended.

Mark 13 is called the Olivet Discourse (because Jesus delivered this teaching from the Mount of Olives, verse 3 indicates, just a day or so before His crucifixion). In Mark 13 Jesus made several predictions that we need to know. Specifically, in Mark 13:9-23 the Master told His disciples to get ready for three inevitable challenges.

I. The Master says get ready for danger (9-13).

Listen to Jesus in verses 9-13—"You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."

Jesus begins with another warning in verse 9. *You must be on your guard.* Who is "you?" For starters, it's Peter, James, John, and Andrew, four of Jesus' chosen men who just asked the Master two questions in verse 3. They wanted to know *when* and *what*, both questions having to do with Jesus' future kingdom plans. Before Jesus addressed their questions, He predicted something else, namely that they would face hardship.

I mentioned last time that some believe Jesus is foretelling what will happen in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. While I agree that some of His predictions in Mark 13 were fulfilled in that horrible event, some were not and pertain to a yet future period of suffering.

Notice carefully three things about this danger.

A. Jesus identifies the sources. The danger will come from four sources.

1. *There will be religious opposition (9a).* "You will be handed over to the local councils [lit. 'sanhedrins; the Great Sanhedrin was in Jerusalem, but every Israeli town had its local Sanhedrin; these were the Jewish courts] and flogged in the synagogues." That's ironic, isn't it? A synagogue was supposed to be a place of worship, but Jesus foretold they would become places of whipping.

You say, "But why would religious Jews whip fellow Jews?"

Because orthodox Jews affirm, "Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord (Deut. 6:4)." But followers of Christ proclaim, "Jesus is Lord!" In the first century this was blasphemous to the Jews and worthy of death.

"You *will* be handed over and flogged," said Jesus. There's certainty in His words. There will be *religious opposition*.

2. *There will be political opposition (9b).* "On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them." When we read Acts that's what we see. We read about Paul standing before powerful rulers like Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and as Acts ends he's preparing to stand before Caesar himself.

In case you're wondering, "Why would civil authorities oppose Christians? Didn't Jesus teach His followers to be good citizens?"

Yes, He did. But He also taught them that their highest allegiance belongs to Him. And that led, at times, to a conflict.

For instance, every citizen of Rome had to confess "Caesar is Lord!" or else. But declaring the Lordship of Caesar was something a Christian could not do. Consequently, he suffered the *or else*.

3. *There will be family opposition (12)*. "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death."

We're often told that "blood is thicker than water." That may be true, but the blood of Christ often divides blood relatives.

If a person in Saudi Arabia announces, "I now declare allegiance to Messiah Jesus," his Muslim family will make him feel the weight of Jesus' prediction.

On another earlier occasion Jesus had this to say in Luke 12:51-53: "Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

The reality is, if you love your family more than Jesus you cannot follow Jesus. That's what Jesus told a crowd of people in Luke 14:25-26, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple."

Last year I spent time in Rome with a young man from Iran. He was wrestling with what to do next. He had finished his university work, during which time he had come to know the Lord Jesus as his Savior. This meant that going home was not a good option, for he would likely be arrested as soon as he entered the country.

"Your own family members will oppose you," Jesus predicted. Your brother may betray you. Your father may turn you in. Your kids may make the call that leads to your death.

Thankfully, we have a *forever family*, the church. That's why in some countries fellow Christians risk their lives to assemble together on the Lord's Day. They know that in the church they are meeting with people with whom they will spend, not simply their earthly existence, but eternity! And so they cherish their *forever family*.

It's so easy to take the church for granted. But suffering has a way of clarifying what's really important.

4. *There will be universal opposition (13)*. "All men will hate you because of me." That's strong language. *All men. Hate you.*

But why? Why would the world hate Jesus-followers? One reason, unfortunately, is because at times we're not very Christlike. We're just offensive, and to the degree that's true, we need to repent and change. But another reason, and it's the one Jesus identifies here, is that we *are* Christlike, by His grace. And that too is offensive.

B. Jesus identifies the reason (9, 13). Verse 9—"On account of Me," Jesus said. And verse 13—"All men will hate you *because of Me*." That's why the world hates Christians. Because it hates Christ. And why would the world hate Christ? For the simple reason that He came to save us.

You say, "I don't get it. Why would Jesus coming to save us cause us to hate Him?" Because as sinners we inherently resist the notion that we *need* a Savior.

Let me illustrate. Suppose I came into your house this afternoon and started looking around. Suppose I went to your desk, took out your checkbook and said, “You’re not spending your money the right way. You’re being selfish and careless.” And suppose I went over and pointed at your television and said, “Why are you watching *that*? God is offended by what you are watching.” What would happen? You’d be offended! You’d want to get rid of me.

Jesus came to save sinners, but herein lies our problem. Sinners don’t like to have their sin exposed. But that’s what Jesus did by His perfect life. He *exposed* our sin. And once exposed, sinners don’t want to change. But that’s what Jesus came to do, *change* us so we begin living for the glory of God. And Jesus’ substitutionary death offends sinners, too. Why? Because sinners don’t want to admit they need a Savior. They’re “good” people. And so in Jerusalem in AD 30 many “good” people nailed Jesus to a cross, just like in Wheelersburg in 2019 many “good” people reject Him.

And so the world despises Christians, because it despises Christ. How are we to respond?

C. Jesus identifies our responsibilities. As disciples, we have three...

1. *We are to be His witnesses (9b-10).* Verse 9—“You will stand before governors and kings *as witnesses to them.*”

Think about it. Persecution creates opportunities of witness. When a Christian is arrested and put on trial, he is forced to answer questions about his faith. The result is a witness. A testimony about Christ goes forth.

Sometimes when we hear about Christians suffering mistreatment in hostile countries, we think, “Why doesn’t God do something?” But the fact is, He *IS* doing something. He is doing exactly what He predicted in Mark 13, giving His followers a platform from which to witness for Him. And so, from courtrooms and prison cells in China, in North Korea, in Iran, and all around this planet, Christ is giving His followers the opportunity to be His witnesses, to tell hell-bound sinners about Him and the way He has provided for their salvation.

It’s happening exactly the way Jesus revealed it would happen. Notice verse 10—“And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.” The Lord’s intent is for His gospel to be proclaimed in all the people groups of the world. Tertullian said to his persecutors, “We multiply whenever we are mown down by you.”²

You say, “I want to be a faithful witness, but I feel so weak! How can we do it in the face of such hostility?” Jesus told us how, by giving us a second responsibility.

2. *We are to depend on the Holy Spirit (11).* “Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

Please don’t take this instruction out of context. Jesus’ promise doesn’t excuse a lack of preparation for those who handle the Scriptures.

The late J. Vernon McGee tells the story about a friend of his who was in Temple, Texas to preach one Sunday morning. While traveling he ran into another preacher who happened to see him going over his notes for his sermon.

“Are you a preacher?” he asked.

“Yes,” McGee’s friend replied.

“What are you doing?” the man inquired.

“I’m going over my notes for my sermon,” was the reply.

“You mean that you prepare your sermon beforehand?”

² In Wiersbe, p. 155.

“Of course, don’t you?”

“No, I don’t. I wait until I get up there and the Spirit of God gives me a message.”

“Well, suppose the Spirit of God doesn’t give you the message immediately. What do you do then?”

“Oh, I just mess around until He does.”

To which McGee offers this insight. “Friend, I’m afraid there is a lot of messing around today. This verse is not talking about anything like that.”³

Jesus is giving this instruction to those who will face persecution. He said the Holy Spirit would come to help them give a faithful witness for Him. “Just open your mouth,” Jesus said. “The Spirit will help you.”

3. *We are to stand firm to the end (13)*. “All men will hate you because of me, but *he who stands firm to the end will be saved*.” In some Bible verses salvation is in the *past* tense (Eph. 2:8). If we are in Christ we *have been saved* from the penalty of our sins. But other verses, like this one, speak of salvation in a *future* sense. Those who have truly been saved will give evidence of it by persevering, by standing true to Christ no matter what. And they *will be saved*.

We need to think of the Christian life, not as a 100 meter dash, but as a marathon. And the prize goes, not for the person who starts well, but for the one who finishes well. I want to finish well. I want you to finish well too, dear brothers and sisters.

To do so, we need to heed Jesus’ challenge, to *get ready for danger*.

II. The Master says get ready for desolation (14-20).

Verse 14—“When you see ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ [it could be translated, ‘the horrible thing which defiles’] standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

What’s Jesus talking about, this “abomination that causes desolation”? The disciples knew exactly what He meant, for they knew their Bibles, the “Old Testament”. Jesus was quoting from Daniel’s prophecy (in 9:27 and 11:31). In essence...

A. Jesus said Daniel’s prophecy would be fulfilled (14). Over 500 years BC Daniel recorded a prophecy indicating a person was coming who would desecrate the Temple and abolish sacrifice there. In the second century BC a powerful man named Antiochus IV Epiphanes (meaning ‘illustrious’) tried to stamp out Jewish religion and impose Greek religion in Israel. He offered swine on the altar in the Jerusalem temple. He set up a statue of Zeus Olympus in front of the Holy Place and ordered the Jews to worship it. The Jewish book 1 Maccabees uses this title to refer to this abominable image.

Then in Mark 13 Jesus predicted it would happen again. He told His disciples, “When you see *the abomination that causes desolation...*” Apparently, although not all Bible scholars agree, Daniel’s prophecy seems to have multiple fulfillments.

What Jesus predicted almost happened in AD 40 when the Roman emperor, Caligula, a man who insisted he was god, proposed to set up his own statue in the temple in Jerusalem. His advisors pleaded with him not to do so, knowing a blood bath would result. Fortunately Caligula died in AD 41 before he could carry out his egotistic plot.

But in AD 70 the prediction did come to pass. The Roman army under Titus surrounded Jerusalem. Jews from the countryside crowded into Jerusalem for protection, yet sadly, in essence, this move led to their death for they were trapped. In the end, as the Jewish historian Josephus recorded, 1,100,000 Jews perished by slow starvation and only

³ J. Vernon McGee, pp. 157-8.

97,000 were taken captive. I can't read in public much of what Josephus recorded due to the graphic description of the horrid conditions, but here's a sampling:

"Then did the famine widen its progress and devoured the people by whole houses and families. The upper rooms were full of women and children dying of starvation. The lanes of the city were full of dead bodies of the aged. The children and the young men wandered about the market places like shadows, all swelled with famine, and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them."⁴

In Luke's parallel account, we find an additional description of the horrible holocaust, in Luke 21:20, with Jesus declaring, "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near." That's what happened in AD 70. And Luke adds this in Luke 21:23-24—"How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

In AD 70, Jerusalem fell. In AD 70 the times of the Gentiles began. In AD 70 the "abomination that causes desolation" came. Yet sadly, it would come again. In 135 AD a statue and temple of Zeus were placed on the ruined site of the temple.

And as terrible as were the events of 167 BC, 40 AD, 70 AD, and 135 AD, it appears they were but anticipations of the final "abomination that causes desolation." Many Bible scholars believe the previous destructions of the temple in Jerusalem, and particularly the one in AD 70, provide the paradigm for a yet future desolation in the period of time known as the Great Tribulation.

We read about it in 2 Thessalonians 2. There Paul is responding to a rumor that was circulating that the day of the Lord had already come (2). He told the Thessalonian Christians the rumor was wrong, and then told them something was going to happen in the world *before* the second coming of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4—"Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until **the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed**, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that **he sets himself up in God's temple**, proclaiming himself to be God."

Ultimately then, the "abomination that causes desolation" seems to refer to the Antichrist, referred to here by Paul as 'the man of lawlessness.' Dr. Harry Rimmer used to say, "Coming events cast their shadows before. Straight ahead lies yesterday!"⁵

Titus killed over one million Jews. The Nazis killed six million Jews in their death camps. Stalin killed twenty million. Yet apparently, the worst expression of Anti-Semitism is yet to come.

There's a little phrase in Mark 13 that may help us with the interpretation of Jesus' words. It's the simple instruction given in verse 14, "Let the reader understand." Did Jesus say those words? Or did Mark insert them? In either case, the statement seems to indicate that at least some of what Jesus is telling Peter, James, John, and Andrew is for the benefit of a *future* generation, for those who would "read" rather than "hear" these

⁴ Barclay, p. 311.

⁵ Quoted in Wiersbe, p. 157.

words of Jesus.⁶ To that generation Jesus' call to *get ready for desolation* would have special significance.

"How would a person *get ready* for such desolation?" you ask. Here's Jesus' answer.

B. Jesus prepared His followers with practical instructions. He told them that when they saw 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it doesn't belong, they were to do three things.

1. *Flee to the mountains (14).* Verse 14—"When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

In other words, when you my followers see the Jewish temple being desecrated, get out of town and head for the hills!

2. *Don't try to take anything with you (15-17).* "Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers!"

When the Romans attacked in AD 70 only those who took heed to Jesus' counsel to flee to the hills survived. Those who headed for the supposed "safety" of the city of Jerusalem perished. History verifies that many Christians fled to Pella in Perea.⁷

3. *Pray it won't happen in winter (18-19).* "Pray that this will not take place in winter, because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again."

It's that last statement that convinces me that what happened in AD 70 is not the ultimate fulfillment of Jesus' prediction. That event was a foreshadowing of the coming desolation in the Great Tribulation.

I personally believe that Christ will take His bride (the Church) out of the world before the seven year Tribulation period begins (based in part on Rev. 3:10) in an event known as the "Rapture" (described in 1 Thes. 4:13-18). The book of Revelation indicates, however, that during the Tribulation period, in spite of intense persecution, many people will come to faith in Christ and many of these will shed their blood for Christ (Rev. 7:13-14). Jesus' words in Mark 13 will provide practical guidance for these "readers."

But those facing hardship need more than guidance, namely, what Jesus gives next.

C. Jesus gave a word of encouragement (20). "If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them." To encourage His people, Jesus shared two truths with them.

1. *The Lord will shorten those days.* Yes, the suffering will be fierce, but it won't last forever. Something else will last forever, as we'll see next time, and that is the glory of God being enjoyed by His people! And why will the Lord cut short those days?

2. *The Lord will do this for the sake of His elect.* Notice how Jesus refers to His people, calling them "the elect." It's a beautiful, hope-giving title—we should use it more often (John did in his letters; 2 John 1 "The elder, to the elect lady and her children").

⁶ On the other hand, "let the reader understand" may refer to the reader of Daniel's prophecy. D. A. Carson offers this interpretation, suggesting that it's the reader of Daniel that Jesus is talking about, not some future reader of His words (*Matthew*, p. 500).

⁷ According to Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.5.3

Who are the elect? Jesus tells us. They are those “whom the Lord has chosen.” Yes, God has chosen a people for Himself. If you are a child of God it is because *He chose you*. It’s mind-boggling yet true. He chose us!

I remember the thrill of knowing that Sherry chose me. Out of all the other potential young men in the world, she chose to give her affection to me. It’s a wonderful thing to know that someone has chosen you and loves you unconditionally.

God’s elect are special to Him. It’s because of the elect He chose to cut short the days of tribulation. It’s because of the elect that He gave His Son to die.

On what basis does God choose individuals and make them part of His “elect”? Is it their merit or worth? No. Is it their choice of Him? No, we weren’t even in existence when He chose us, for He set His sovereign affection on us before He created the world (Eph 1:4). So on what basis then? The answer is one word...

Grace. To the praise of the glory of His grace, says Ephesians 1:6. “This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time (2 Tim. 1:9).”

Some shy away from the doctrine of election, but Jesus didn’t. He encouraged His disciples with it as they faced horrible suffering and intense persecution. Yes, the so-called religious experts will ridicule and flog you. And the civil authorities will arrest you and say you are the scum of society. And your own family members will betray you and put you to death. *But know this...*

You are God’s *elect*! He has chosen you! No matter what the world says about you, the only one whose opinion matters says you are His! And He will not allow you to face more than you can bear. He will cut short those days *for your sake*.

So get ready, says Jesus. Get ready for danger. Get ready for desolation. Thirdly...

III. The Master says get ready for deception (21-23).

Jesus ends this prophetic section as He began it, with another warning. Verse 9, “Be on your guard.” Verse 23, “Be on your guard. I have told you everything ahead of time.”

A. Jesus warned about false Christs (21). “At that time⁸. if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it.” When crisis hits the world, people frantically look for quick fixes and tend to believe anyone who promises what they want to hear. Don’t do that, Jesus said. Don’t believe the false Christs.

B. Jesus predicted they will perform convincing signs and miracles (22). “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible.” Just because a person works a miracle doesn’t mean he’s from God. False Christs can work (and according to Jesus *will* work) miracles, too.

C. Jesus told His people to be discerning (23). “So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.” Why did Jesus give these predictions to the disciples? He did it to protect them, to protect *us*. See the love of our Savior in this, dear ones. He is helping His followers get ready for what’s coming: for danger, for desolation, and for *deception*.

There is protective power in God’s Word, my friend. His Word protects us, but only if we know it, and take heed to it.

Think about your owner’s manual for your car. It will protect you. It tells you how much oil to put in. But if you don’t read the manual, you won’t know what to do when the red light blinks on the dash. “Oh, what a pretty light. The manufacturer put that light there to entertain me!” No, he put it there to warn you, to help you make necessary corrections.

⁸ Note the time indicator, at the time of coming desolation.

Brothers and sisters, we need to heed Jesus' call for discernment. The deceiver is so sly and I fear we may be losing ground and not even realize it. No, we're not facing overt persecution. Our enemy is using different tactics on the American church.

The following story told about a man who had a dream illustrates the point...

"I saw in a dream that I was in the Celestial City—though when and how I got there I could not tell. I was one of a great multitude which no man could number, from all countries and peoples and times and ages. Somehow I found that the saint who stood next to me had been in Heaven more than 1,860 years.

"Who are you?" I said to him. (We both spoke the same language of heavenly Canaan, so that I understood him and he me.)

"I," said he, "was a Roman Christian; I lived in the days of the Apostle Paul, I was one of those who died in Nero's persecutions. I was covered with pitch and fastened to a stake and set on fire to light up Nero's gardens."

"How awful!" I exclaimed.

"No," he said, "I was glad to do something for Jesus. He died on the cross for me."

The man on the other side then spoke: "I have been in Heaven only a few hundred years. I came from an island in the South Seas—Erromanga. John Williams, a missionary, came and told me about Jesus, and I too learned to love Him. My fellow-countrymen killed the missionary, and they caught and bound me. I was beaten until I fainted and they thought I was dead, but I revived. Then next day they knocked me on the head, cooked and ate me."

"How terrible!" I said.

"No," he answered, "I was glad to die as a Christian. You see the missionaries had told me that Jesus was scourged and crowned with thorns for me."

Then they both turned to me and said, "What did you suffer for Him? Or did you sell what you had for the money which sent men like John Williams to tell the heathen about Jesus?"

And I was speechless. And while they both were looking at me with sorrowful eyes, I awoke, and it was a dream! But I lay on my soft bed awake for hours, thinking of the money I had wasted on my own pleasures; or my extra clothing, and costly car, and many luxuries; and I realized that I did not know what the words of Jesus meant: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34)."⁹

Some forms of deception are more obvious, like the fraud who claims to be Jesus. Some are not so obvious yet just as dangerous, like the notion that we can follow Christ and have this world too.

Let's take to heart Jesus' challenges. Let's get ready for *danger*. Let's get ready for *desolation*. And let's get ready for *deception*.

I would be amiss if I failed to mention this. What we've considered this morning is not the end of the story. There's something else that Jesus predicted...

One Final Challenge: Get ready for the glory of His second coming (24-26)!

Verse 26—"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." There's the rest of the story! Jesus is coming again, so get ready to see His glory! We'll explore that wonderful subject next week, the Lord willing.

⁹Tan, P. L. (1996, c1979). *Encyclopedia of 7700 illustrations : [a treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers]*. Garland TX: Bible Communications.