

## MARK 13:14-31      **FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS**

<sup>14</sup> “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. <sup>15</sup> Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out. <sup>16</sup> Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. <sup>17</sup> How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! <sup>18</sup> Pray that this will not take place in winter, <sup>19</sup> because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. <sup>22</sup> For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible. <sup>23</sup> So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time. <sup>24</sup> “But in those days, following that distress, ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; <sup>25</sup> the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ <sup>26</sup> “At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. <sup>30</sup> I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

This confusion of images sets for the reader a trajectory along which he might adjust his sight in order to see what is coming. In the beginning, God brought order to the chaos of creation (Genesis 1 and 2). Man then brought disorder into the garden through his sin (Genesis 3). The prophecy of Daniel predicted “the abomination that causes desolation” (Daniel 12:11), which has been rightly applied to the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC, the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, and might even apply to the construction of a center of worship for a religion that denies the deity of Christ on the Temple mount today. The symbolism is indicative of the replacement of God by that which is not God, whether in the world or in our personal lives and the result is the return to chaos. But as God spoke his Word over the chaos in the beginning, again his Word will return to restore order. Indeed, the transformation will be so complete that the world will be created anew.

Jesus calls us to be on our guard so that we do not get caught up in the confusion and lose our way. Just as Peter was able to negotiate walking on the water (a symbol of chaos to the Jews) as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus (Matthew 14:28-31), we too are urged to keep our focus on God in order not to lose hope and remain faithful until God restores order. We are to keep always foremost in our thoughts that regardless of the apparent circumstances, Jesus’ “words will never pass away.”

**Lord, deliver me from my tendency to replace you as the center of my life with my desire of the moment. Help me to navigate this life by sighting on you as the star that guides me through the darkness and chaos of this life.  
Amen**