Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering: **Mark 13:24-37**

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book): Year B - Advent 1 or Christ the King, Text: Mark 13:24-37
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary): Year B - Advent 1, Text: Mark 13:24-37

In the lead up to today's pericope, in Mark 13:1–2, Jesus predicts the coming destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans — an event that took place in AD 70. His prediction of the coming destruction of the Temple prompts questions that the four named disciples put to Him in private concerning the time and the sign when all these things would take place (13:3–4).

Jesus' response to these questions is his eschatological (end-time) discourse prior to His approaching death. The discourse contains instruction and consolation exhorting the disciples and the church to demonstrate faith and obedience through the trials that they would soon have to experience (Verses 5–13).

The sign is the presence of the desolating abomination (v. 14) of the Roman power profaning the Temple. Jesus urges them to flee from Jerusalem rather than defend the city based on misguided messianic hopes.

Mark 13:14–23 focuses on the suffering that will take place prior to the end of history. Intervention will occur only after the destruction (Verses 24–27), which will happen before the end of the first Christian generation (Verses 28–31). No one but the Father knows the precise time, or that of the *Parousia* (Jesus' Final Reappearing, v. 32); hence the need for constant vigilance (Verses 33-37).

Verses 13:24–25: In these verses, the message is: After the suffering comes the physical end of the world. The verses reflect Is. 13:10; 34:4; Ezek. 32:7–8; Joel 2:10, 31; 2 Esdras 5:4–5. (Mark 15:33 refers to the sun being darkened during the hours prior to Jesus' death.)

Verses 13:26–27 refer to Jesus as the Son of Man. The term has its roots in Daniel 7, especially 7:13. The message in Daniel is that although God's people have suffered under a series of foreign empires (the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, Greeks, and Ptolemies), the time is approaching when God will give His people, the "saints of the Most High" (of whom the Son of Man is a symbol) dominion over the nations of the world "forever and forever."

Jesus now refers to Himself (and eventually His followers, His brothers and sisters) as the true people of God who have been given dominion of the nations of the world. The Final Day is coming when His true identity will be revealed, and He will save His people from destruction and gather them from the four corners of the earth into His Eternal Home.

Verses 13:28–31: When Jesus was on His way into Jerusalem on the Monday after Palm Sunday (11:12–20), He cursed a fig tree and then attacked the Temple System. The next day (Tuesday), when Jesus and the disciples returned to Jerusalem, the fig tree was dead.

Jesus' followers are to read the signs that take place in history and remind themselves constantly that although difficult days lie ahead, Jesus' promise of final deliverance for His people will most certainly come to pass.

Verses 13:32–36: It is interesting to note that Jesus says that even He Himself does not know the "final date" for history; only His Father knows (v. 32). It may take place at any time — in the evening, or at midnight, at 3 a.m. ("cockcrow"), or at sunrise!

Even so, Jesus' followers, His brothers and sisters, are to be on constant alert for that final event and, while waiting, are to devote life to believing, doing, and proclaiming the things of God's Kingdom. So, no spiritual dozing off! Keep awake!

(An alternate Gospel reading in the LSB lectionary for Year B - Advent 1 is Mark 1:1-11, the Triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem).

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