

## Mark 13

V.1-4 Jesus foretells of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

It appears that this disciple is quite infatuated with the Temple, as many are of religious edifices.

Some of the greatest structures in the world are religious in nature. They are quite striking.

They impart a sense of awe and wonder to those who visit them and it is easy to feel dwarfed by the sheer magnitude of some of these buildings. In fact that is the intention behind the design of some of these buildings.

The Temple in Jerusalem was similarly striking, and it was the epi-center of the Jewish national and religious life. To visit the Temple was a big deal.

Jesus says something interesting here - that this revered structure, that many people felt a strong attachment to would be cast down - destroyed.

Imagine how that would have sounded to the hearer? The center of your religious and national life, a large part of your identity, will be destroyed, thrown down.

This would have been devastating, and cause for much anxiety to the hearer.

So what should they fix their eyes too then after the temple is destroyed? How shall they meet with God? God's people shall become His temple, that is the answer.

[1Co 3:16 NKJV] 16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and [that] the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Jesus' words come to pass - the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD by the Roman General Titus. \*(Some argue that the dating of the NT books is earlier than this date since no NT book contains this information explicitly).

“Within forty years after our Lord's crucifixion, his prediction of its overthrow was accomplished...The Roman legions took the city of Jerusalem by storm, and notwithstanding the strenuous efforts Titus made to preserve the temple, his soldiers set fire to it in several places, and it was utterly destroyed (A.D. 70), and was never

rebuilt...The summit of Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood, is now occupied by the Haram esh-Sherif, i.e., "the sacred enclosure." ...About the centre of the enclosure is a raised platform, 16 feet above the surrounding space, and paved with large stone slabs, on which stands the Mohammedan mosque called Kubbet es-Sahkra i.e., the "Dome of the Rock," or the Mosque of Omar. This mosque covers the site of Solomon's temple." (Easton's Bible Dictionary)

We find in verse 3&4 that the disciples appear concerned about this prophetic word, they follow up questioning Jesus on when these things will happen.

It's important to note that as we go through Mark 13 and any prophetic scripture that we are careful to understand that the things Jesus says will come to pass are not necessarily straight linear, or immediately consecutive. As we will see with Jesus teaching on suffering and persecution, some of these things are enduring promises to the church.

V.5-8 Don't be deceived/the beginning of sorrows.

People don't know when they're deceived, that is the nature of deception.

How then are we to guard against deception? Know God's Word, know the certainty of God's Word. Listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and know that the Holy Spirit and the Word will never contradict one another.

If something we hear or experience comes "wrapped" in the assertion that, "the Holy Spirit spoke to me this thing..." then God's Word will support that.

Wicked deceivers have come forth claiming special divine revelation that contradicts scripture.

[Gal 1:8-9 NKJV] 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Many deceivers will come, Jesus warns His disciples. If they were open to deception, those who knew Christ in the flesh, who received instruction from Him directly - we are too!

(Origen) "Christ is truth. Antichrist falsifies truth. Christ is wisdom. Antichrist deftly simulates wisdom. All genuine excellences have a

correspondence with Christ. All pretended virtues correspond with Antichrist. For each variety of good which Christ embodies in himself to build up the faithful, the demonic will find a way of mimicking in appearance to deceive the faithful.

Oden, T. C., & Hall, C. A. (Eds.). (1998). [\*Mark \(Revised\)\*](#) (p. 172). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Also, we should bear in mind that Jesus says deception will be common - so don't lose heart! We are warned in advance. There is hope.

The beginnings of sorrows not the end - wars, rumors of wars, nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes, famines, troubles (commotion/sedition).

These things are common to a fallen creation - is it any wonder that the early church believed they were living in the last days? Is it any wonder that, as these conditions endure across millenia, that our hearts cry is "come quickly Lord Jesus?"

V.9-13 The work of the saints in the end times and over all time includes suffering and painful division.

You will be delivered up to councils, beaten in synagogues, brought before rulers and kings for Jesus' sake as a testimony to them.

This happened almost immediately after the ascension as the disciples began to preach the gospel.

Keep in mind that the gospel must be preached to all nations - this is the proclamation of the good news! That Jesus Christ came to save sinners and reconcile us to God the Father by His substitutionary death on the cross. This GOOD NEWS!

Yet even in the proclaiming of the good news there is much bitter division and suffering. Jesus doesn't promise that when they preach the gospel, when we preach the gospel that we will be met with roarious applause, but suffering, fractured families, arrest, even death.

We should expect to be hated, mocked, dismissed, mischaracterized, beaten, arrested, etc. Why, because Jesus told us if we are preaching the gospel then that would happen. And, that's how He was treated!

[Jhn 15:18-21 NKJV] 18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before [it hated] you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 "Remember the word

that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.

Sometimes we want to fabricate a faith without suffering, or share the gospel without criticism (if we share it at all), or even build a perfect moral christian society but none of that is ever promised to us.

And the glorious reality of this is that when we do share in suffering, when the doctrines of Christ become more and more marginalized or defamed, we are then sharing in the likeness of our Lord.

[Phi 3:10 NKJV] 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

And that is still good news because - people will receive the gospel, people will be reconciled to God by Christ, and we get to share in that glorious work, come what may!

In all of that we are to rely on the Holy Spirit, not ourselves - enduring until the end.

V.14 - the Abomination of Desolation, or the Abomination that brings the desolation.

There are a couple of different views on this as far as timing is concerned.

You will notice that Jesus makes reference to the prophet Daniel. Daniel is quite a rich book prophetically.

We must be careful when making assertions about future events though. Here's why, the Messiah - Christ, was written about all through the Old Testament scriptures and yet for all of what appears plain to us, the Bible scholars of Jesus' day denied the validity of His claim.

They very easily misinterpreted the prophecies that spoke of Christ and were wrong.

Prophecies are only truly realized once they have come to pass - because the language in prophecies is often vague.

After these things come to pass it is easy for us to look at them and see how they fit together.

It's important for us to be clear about what we are certain of and what we have an incomplete view of - that's just part of having some intellectual honesty and not being deceptive.

This particular prophecy is interpreted by some to refer to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 where the Roman legions desecrated the temple by offering pagan sacrifices in it after their victory.

Of course the Temple has been defiled many times over the generations as recorded in God's word and other historical documents - even by God's own people, worshipping other Gods, misplacing the Scriptures (2 King 22), etc.

Some others see this as an event yet to occur, as we wait on a third temple era - wherein the abomination of desolation will occur - namely a person setting himself up to be worshipped as God in the Temple, having deceived many to his cause.

[2Th 2:3-4, 9-10 NKJV] 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for [that Day will not come] unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. ... 9 The

coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

V.15-23 The Great Tribulation - greater than normal/enduring tribulation as described in v. 8-13

The Great Tribulation is marked by a pressing, affliction, and distress that has not been seen since creation.

It is also a final time for people to receive the gospel and repent. We see here that Christ speaks of the elect - those who are chosen by God to be His tribulation saints.

[Rev 7:13-14 NKJV] 13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Also marked by false Christ's - false saviors - who may make grand promises but lack the substance of Christ.

Marked by false prophets - people who speak presumptively and use the appearance of God or godliness to their advantage, who lack the substance of true prophetic utterance.

Wonders and signs - are not relegated to the holy only, false prophets and christ's will use these to their advantage to deceive even the elect! What are we watching, listening to, convinced by?

Take heed - pay attention!

V.24-27 The return of Christ

The church waits in a second season of advent - of hopeful expectation that our Lord shall return again.

(Augustine) Will not the Lord come again in later times, when all the peoples of the earth shall lament? He came first in preaching, and filled the whole wide world. Let us not resist his first coming, that we may not tremble at his second.

Oden, T. C., & Hall, C. A. (Eds.). (1998). [\*Mark \(Revised\)\*](#) (p. 179). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

V.28-30 The parable of the fig tree, be discerning, keep your eyes open - THIS generation is the generation who begin to see the Great Tribulation.

Those who discern these signs that precede the Great Tribulation - namely the Abomination of Desolation (v.14) will remain until Christ returns. That is the generation referred to, who will see the metaphorical fig tree put forth its leaves.

V.31 - Christ's words will never pass away (this is an emphatic negation with the *ou μη* construct).

Will NEVER EVER pass away.

V.32 - No one knows the day or hour, not even the son, nor the angels, only the Father - beware of date setting, beware of coming close to date setting, beware of implying date setting!

(Irenaeus)The gnostics presumptuously assume acquaintance with the unspeakable mysteries of God. Remember that even the Lord, the very Son of God, allowed that the Father alone knows the very day and hour of judgment.... If then the Son was not ashamed to ascribe the knowledge of that day to the Father only, but declared what was true regarding the matter, neither let us be ashamed to reserve for God those enigmatic questions which come our way

Oden, T. C., & Hall, C. A. (Eds.). (1998). Mark (Revised) (p. 184). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Does this mean that Jesus was not omniscient? Was not fully God?

How foolish and arrogant of us! To think that we can come to know above and better than our Lord.

Be a discerner and be comfortable with limited knowledge. We are called to endure to the end not be experts on the chronology of it all. The only way we shall endure is by fixing our eyes on Christ and His word.

V.33-37 Watch, pray, watch! Jesus says over and over again to be watchful. Keep your eyes open. Don't fall asleep in your faith! Be prayerful! Be in constant communication with the Father - listening and speaking. With our eyes, our hearts, our minds, bodies, and spirits, fixed intently on Jesus Christ. And by His Spirit we shall endure to the end.