

Mark 13

Well it's been a few weeks since we were in the Gospel of Mark and I want to just briefly remind you before we get into the text tonight that we are really now looking at the last few days of the life of Jesus.

Previously we had seen Jesus enter into the city of Jerusalem and he was riding on a donkey that had never been ridden on before in His life and the people if you remember were praising Him and declaring "blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."

While the people praised Jesus, we might remember that there was a different group of people that really wanted Jesus dead. The religious leaders had decided long ago that Jesus was an enemy and they constantly looked for a way to come against Him.

A few chapters ago they had tried to trap Jesus in His words asking Him if they should pay taxes to Caesar or not. The Lord responded by simply saying they were to give to Caesar that which was Caesar's and to God that which was God's. In every question that the religious leaders asked Jesus always had a wonderful and scriptural response.

And then finally the last time we were together we saw Jesus in the temple watching people put their offerings into the boxes...and there were many that came and put in large sums of money...we might imagine the people thinking highly of those who did so. The Lord though was more impressed by what a widow did as she came. She gave all she had giving just two small coins. The Lord said she had given more than all the others had.

I am reminded and what we will see develop here in chapter 13 is that the disciples often had their priorities and their beliefs about the

Messiah in the wrong place. Jesus had corrected them many times and yet they still hadn't grabbed hold of what had been said.

If you remember the disciples and the Jewish people believed that when the Messiah came that there was going to be an overthrowing of the Roman government and an immediate establishment of the kingdom of God...Jesus however had made it clear that He had come not to be served but instead to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Jesus repeatedly spoke of His death and also of His resurrection and yet the disciples simply had not understood.

One final comment and we'll get into this. The Gospel of Mark is written much more concisely than the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Mark gets straight to the point, he doesn't get into all the details and this particular portion of scripture before us tonight is covered in more detail in the other Gospels. For homework you might take a look at Matthew 24 and Luke 21 and if you wanted to you could listen to the teachings we did previously on Luke 21 and I've added those to the featured messages section of our app and website.

With these things in mind let's look at verses 1-2 of chapter 13 which say **Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!"**

²And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

I just want to give a brief description of the topography of the city of Jerusalem and the temple itself. The temple was a massive structure

that could be seen from a far distance outside of Jerusalem. You could easily see it and perhaps the best viewing angle was from the Mount of Olives which is where Jesus is seen in verse 3 of our text today.

As Jesus and the disciples exited the east side of the city they would have gone down through what is called the Kidron valley and then up into the Mount of Olives. At this time it was not yet completed and it wasn't until around 63 AD that it was finally finished.

The stones that the temple were made of were massive being recorded as 12 feet wide by 12 feet deep by 40 feet long weighing over 400 tons.

So important was the temple to the Jewish people that we learn in Acts 6:13 that the law of God and the temple were placed on equal ground.

As the disciples were talking to Jesus about how awesome the temple was I can imagine Jesus very soberly responding to them that not one stone would be left on another and that all the stones would be thrown down.

Once again I believe the disciples would have been shocked to hear this. This was not what the plan was in their minds. It was unfathomable that the temple would ever be destroyed as it had taken so many years to construct and was so awesome.

Now the disciples had no idea what Jesus was saying but you and I today know that this was literally fulfilled. In the year 70 AD the Roman general Titus came to Jerusalem and destroyed it. The story goes that at the end of the siege of Jerusalem, that some people ran to

hide in the temple as it was one of the most safe places in the city. Titus wanted to save the temple and had given orders to do so but a soldier who many assert was drunk ended up setting fire to the temple killing the people and melting the gold that covered the outside melting it into the cracks of the stones.

Titus then ordered the entire temple to be taken apart one stone at a time in order to recover the gold. What Jesus said literally came to pass and the temple which had just been finished 7 years previously was destroyed. Today the only thing left of the previous temple mount is what we call the Wailing wall or the Western wall.

I can imagine Jesus and the disciples exiting the city and the disciples having heard what Jesus said were probably in shock. I can imagine them thinking about it as they travelled to the Mount of Olives and perhaps the disciples had a chat about it on the way and then as they discussed this they nominated 4 of them and said “You go ask the Lord what He meant by saying these things.”

Look at verses 3-4 which say ³**Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ⁴“Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”**

So here we have two sets of brothers that came to Jesus to attempt to gain some understanding and they specifically asked Jesus when these things would take place and what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled.

I will admit that these questions provide a bit of confusion when we look at them because the response of Jesus that we see in the rest of

the chapter before us doesn't seem to fit the questions that the disciples asked.

Jesus is going to go on to speak of the end of the age and the signs of the end times and the persecutions that would one day take place.

I want to point something out to you in verse 4 about the questions that were asked...**You might underline the word THESE which is seen twice.** The disciples asked When would THESE things take place and what will be the sign that THESE things will take place.

It would seem from the question that the disciples are not just asking when the temple would be destroyed but when would multiple things take place and we should ask what the things were the disciples were asking about.

And I think we get the answer from the previous chapter in Mark. If you remember back in Mark 12 the Lord began by speaking a parable about some wicked vinedressers who were working in the vineyard of an owner. The owner had left and the workers began to attempt to take control of the vineyard as their own. When the owner sent servants to collect some of the produce the workers mistreated them and even killed some. Finally, the owner sent his son saying surely, they would respect him. When the vinedressers saw the son they said let's kill him and take the vineyard as our own.

At the end the Lord made the statement that the vineyard would be taken from those who were tasked with working it and given to others...and this as we talked about it was indicating that the Jewish people in general were not properly entering into and taking care of

the kingdom of God and that one day the Gentiles would be given the kingdom which we can see is still in place today.

Jesus also quoted from Psalm 118 in Mark 12 which speaks of how the cornerstone would be rejected but that He would become the chief cornerstone. Of course this prophetically spoke of the rejection of Jesus.

Then after this in Mark 12 there was a question about the resurrection that was given to Jesus by the Sadducees and the Sadducees quickly learned they were very wrong and didn't know the scriptures the way they should.

Finally in chapter 12 Jesus had asked a question to those who were trying to trap Him in His Words and Jesus as He spoke about how the Messiah would be both the son of David and the Lord of David at the same time quoted from Psalm 110 which spoke of how one day the enemies of The Lord of David would be as a footstool. This clearly spoke of the rule and reign of the Messiah one day.

So I think from the context of Mark 12 which took place shortly before these questions were asked **that you and I can deduce that the disciples were not just asking** about the temple and when it would be destroyed **but also about the resurrection and when it would take place,** and how it would be that the Messiah would be the chief cornerstone **and when it would be that the Son of David would make His enemies a footstool.**

I spoke of this earlier but remember that the disciples at this point were thoroughly confused about what was about to happen and how the kingdom of God would come about.

I might also mention that in Matthew 24:3 we have additional information about the questions asked. It says this ³Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Keeping all this in mind let's see how Jesus responded if you look at verses 5-8 which say ⁵And Jesus, answering them, began to say: “Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁶For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am *He*,’ and will deceive many. ⁷But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. *These are* the beginnings of sorrows.

Jesus didn't want the disciples to be deceived about what would happen in the future. *Not only would the temple be destroyed but there would be many that would* come and declare I AM HE and would deceive many.

Throughout history it's obvious that *there have been* many that have come proclaiming to have the truths of God or even be God themselves. *False religions are a dime a dozen if you do some research and surely many have* been deceived.

If you just do some research there are even many that have proclaimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus Himself.

I would remind us that the enemy of the souls of humanity is a Master deceiver and He will do anything he can to distract from the love of Jesus Christ as demonstrated on the cross.

Jesus also warned here that there would be wars and rumors of wars as kingdom would come against kingdom. I heard one pastor say that of all the years of human history which is some 6,000 years only 70 of those years are estimated to have seen a world that was at peace.

Let me just list a few countries that have been in the news lately that are associated with war..Venezuela, United States, Iran, Israel, China, Russia, Ukraine and the list goes on.

Not only would there be rumors of wars but Jesus also said there would be world events that included earthquakes in various places and famine and all kinds of troubles. Have you ever heard someone say “This is the end of the world?” When bad things begin to happen, when natural disasters take place, when there is war happening and rumors of it people naturally say “Is this the end?”

Jesus warns the disciples that these things will take place but notice and you might underline the end of verse 8 as Jesus said “THESE ARE THE BEGINNINGS OF SORROWS” literally Jesus is saying these are the beginning of birth pains.

In other words Jesus is saying this isn't the end. Eventually the end will come but all these difficulties are only working towards the eventual coming of the kingdom. I believe most of us here know a little about child birth. When birth pains begin they are few and far between and then they begin to happen more frequently and more intensely you get ready for you know the birth of a child is near.

So it is in this world. You and I can look around and know that things are getting worse, that the labor pains and groans of this world are getting more intense...We'll talk about this shortly but one day they will get a lot worse and all that difficulty will lead to the birthing of the kingdom of God.

Not only would the world go through great difficulty but Jesus wanted the disciples to know they would go through personal difficulty as well if you look at verses 9-13 which say ⁹“**But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.** ¹⁰**And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.** ¹¹**But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.** ¹²**Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.** ¹³**And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.**

This was probably very sobering for the disciples. Jesus makes it clear that persecution and suffering were in their future. The Lord said they would be beaten in the synagogues and that certainly did take place if you read the book of Acts.

They would also be brought before rulers and even kings and Paul was seen doing just this towards the end of the book of Acts.

The truth is that persecution did come for the disciples and it will come for all those that choose to live a godly life. Persecution is to be expected by those that choose to live whole heartedly for Jesus.

You and I just like the disciples should not be surprised when the world hates us and regularly comes against us. Jesus here even warned that brother would betray brother and we certainly see this in the Muslim world when anyone chooses to convert to Christianity.

The Lord even had an exhortation that those who endured to the end would be saved. You and I should look to endure as we live for Christ. There should be a determination, a longsuffering on our part, a patient endurance in the lives of the saints to honor the Lord even in great difficulty. We should be reminded of the many martyrs that have gone before us...and we should ask ourselves what is it in life that is worth laying our lives down for. I believe laying our lives down for the sake of Jesus is the highest calling a believer can have.

I want to point out also here that the Lord told the disciples not to worry about what they might say when times of persecution came upon them for the Holy Spirit would give them the words. I love that and I am reminded of Paul and Silas while they were in prison and they weren't at all worried about what they were going to say to defend themselves but instead they were seen in prison simply singing unto the Lord.

We should prepare in life for sure, we should study the Word and work to hide the truths of God in our hearts but when the day comes we need not worry for the Spirit of God will give us just what to say in the moment.

I think this would have been hard for the disciples to hear...but I can also imagine that these very words often came to their hearts and minds as they suffered for the kingdom of God.

Now as we move forward here in the next verses we need to understand that even today these are future events that are spoken of.

Look with me at verses 14-18 which say this ¹⁴“**So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not”** (let the reader understand), **“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶ And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁷ But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ¹⁸ And pray that your flight may not be in winter.**

If you are here tonight and you haven’t heard or studied much about prophecy and what is going to happen in the future then I want you to know there is coming a day that something very strange is going to happen that the prophet Daniel spoke of.

In the end times there is going to come a time period that in the Bible and in Christian circles is called the final week of Daniel and you can read about this over in Daniel 9:26-27. In this prophecy Daniel the prophet speaks of how there are 490 years or 70 weeks of 7’s that will encompass the work of God on behalf of the Jewish people. 483 of those years are completed and when that 483rd year came it coincided with the coming of Jesus Christ as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Right now we are in what is called the church age as Jesus has turned His eyes to the Gentile world and that means anyone that is not Jewish...But there will come a day when the focus of God will return to the Jewish people again.

I believe that the scriptures support what is called a pretribulation rapture of the church...and what that means is there is coming a day that Jesus is going to come back for the church for those who believe in Jesus and suddenly in the twinkling of an eye those who believe in Jesus will be snatched away into heaven to be with the Lord.

After this happens there will come a man who will be quite powerful indeed...He is known as the antichrist and he is going to be a man that the world will admire, he will have answers and bring about temporary peace on the planet. He will even sign a 7 year treaty with the people of Israel...When that treaty is signed it will be the beginning of what is called the final 7 years or the tribulation period.

During the first half of this time the world will see great prosperity...but something will happen right in the middle of the 7 years as the antichrist is going to come to the temple and declare that he himself is God and there will be a statue or an image that is placed in the temple...This is what Jesus speaks of here when he says there will be a day that "you will see the abomination of desolation"

When this takes place the Jewish people who are living during the tribulation will realize that the antichrist is a liar, that he is not their Messiah and they will have a very difficult time as the Lord Jesus tells them that they would need to flee and get out of the city and if they had anything in their houses they are not to get it and the Lord even said of those who are pregnant and nursing that it will be very hard for

them as they won't be able to move quick enough...and the Lord even says pray this won't take place in winter when travelling is difficult as well.

The scriptures indicate that there is coming a day and I believe it will take place when the antichrist comes in and declares he is God that Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet will attempt to exterminate the Jewish people...the scriptures indicate that perhaps 2/3 of the Jewish people will die while only 1/3 will escape to a place that God has prepared for them and will protect them.

Now your head may be spinning if you aren't familiar with these prophecies and again I encourage you to go onto the website or our church app and go the Featured Messages section and there are a bunch of messages on there that you can listen to if you want to gain some additional understanding. I would especially recommend listening to the teaching on Revelation 12 as it will speak of how the Jewish people will need to run for their lives during this time.

Now during these days we are talking about Jesus had more to say if you look at verses 19-23 which say ¹⁹ **For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.** ²⁰ **And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.** ²¹ **"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, He is there!' do not believe it.** ²² **For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.** ²³ **But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.**

When this time takes place in the middle of the 7 year tribulation period things are going to take a dark turn in the world...So bad will times be that Jesus said that there will be disasters so difficult that never before had such a time been seen on the earth. I am immediately reminded of the flood and destruction that came upon the world and the lives that were lost and I'm thinking can it ever be as bad as this?

I encourage you to read Revelation 16-19 and you'll get a picture of how bad things will get. Sores will break out on people, the waters will turn into blood and all sea life will die, the sun will seemingly go into a supernova status as men will be burned, spiritual darkness will come on the world and men will gnaw their tongues, the Euphrates river will dry up in preparation for war and massive earthquakes will take place, every island will disappear and hail that weighs some 75 pounds will fall from the skies.

Talk about birth pains increasing in intensity...This final 3 ½ year period will bring the world to its knees as the wrath of God will be poured out...In Jeremiah 30:7 this time period is called the time of Jacob's trouble but it's also called the Great Tribulation.

We are told here that the days would be shortened for the elect's sake and that's speaking of the people of Israel that the Lord is going to be working in during this time.

During this time there will be an unholy trinity that attempts to rule the world as Satan, the antichrist who will still be trying to be the so called savior of the world and a person referred to as the false prophet will be deceiving the nations and even the elect if that were possible. You

can read about this in Revelation 13, Daniel 12:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 and Daniel 9.

Verses 24-27 say this ²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

The earth will be smoldering, the sun won't shine like it does today, the moon won't be seen as well, the stars will fall and the powers of the heavens will be shaken and then at the end of the 7 year period Jesus Christ will come back with the saints to this earth in His glorious return. All the world will see His coming...And this time Jesus won't come as the suffering servant but instead as the conquering king of the world. The works of Satan will be destroyed and you can read all about this in Revelation 19 and again you can find messages on this in the Featured Messages section.

During this time those who have survived the 7 year period called the Tribulation and have believed in Jesus Christ will be gathered from the farthest parts of the earth in Jerusalem to worship the king and the world will be restored as Jesus heals the nations.

It is at this time that Jesus will reign for a 1,000 year period called the millennial reign and all of His enemies will be under His feet just as Jesus spoke of in Mark 12.

Look at verses 28-31 say this ²⁸ **“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁰ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.**

It's spring time in Jerusalem as Jesus says these things and the fig tree was beginning to put out leaves in preparation for the growing season...Jesus is essentially saying you know what time of season it is as you simply observe the plant life around you.

So also Jesus is saying you will be able to tell where we are prophetically as you observe the world around you. Definite signs will be seen that will indicate how near the physical return of Jesus to this world is...and the generation that saw the sign of the abomination of desolation would surely see all these things take place and come to a completion.

The Lord even said that heaven and earth would pass away but His words would never do so...Science agrees even Elon Musk agrees that this world is not going to last forever and it will one day cease to exist.

In 2 Peter 3:7 we get the method that this world will be destroyed when it says ⁷ **But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.**

God's Word will always prevail and it will always come to pass.

Look with me at verses 32-37 which say ³² “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

Well I will just say there are an awful lot of people that need to read these verses...because there seem to have been a lot of people that have put a date on the return of Jesus Christ and the simple reality is that no one knows the day or the hour...If we did know it then I can guarantee you there will be some that will play games with God and then at the last moment attempt to get right with the Lord.

Jesus here says that He Himself did not even know the day or the hour...We might remember that in many ways Jesus laid aside His authority as God and humbled Himself to the knowledge of man. Clearly, we can see that the Father and the Son were both God and had different roles they played in the kingdom.

Jesus even gave a warning here when He said listen to these things and pray because you don't know when the time will come. You and I as believers should be able to observe the times that we live in and line them up with scripture and we should know that the coming of Jesus for the church can happen at any moment.

We each have been given very specific assignments in our service unto Jesus and we should live diligently working to fulfill that which Jesus has laid hold of us for.

I don't know about you but I don't want to be caught sleeping when the rapture of the church happens...and just to give a brief definition of the rapture of the church listen to what Paul said about it over in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 which says ¹⁶**For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words.**

You and I as children of King Jesus should be eagerly awaiting His return. WE should be prepared in our hearts and our minds, and our actions should reflect we are ready for Him to come back.

I have to ask you today are you ready for Jesus to come back? Are you living as a faithful servant? Are you prepared for the Master's coming?

If you are here today and you know in your heart you aren't living properly...today is the day to repent and turn from anything that may be holding you back in your service of Jesus.

Perhaps today you are here and you know that you aren't right with the Lord at all and you have never come to Jesus and accepted Him as your Lord and Savior...Maybe today is the day you need to do that and if that's you I just encourage you to grab me after the service as I would love to pray with you.

Finally...If you are here tonight and you are sitting here confused, I just encourage you to read through this chapter once again and for homework head over to the church website or the app and check out the Featured Messages section if you want to hear more about the themes we looked at this evening.

Let me pray for us and we'll worship in conclusion.

Mark 13 “When Will These Things Be?”

Cross References

Verses 3-4

Matthew 24:3

Verses 28-31

2 Peter 3:7

Verses 32-37

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18