

Mark: Come Follow Me
Mark 13:1-23
October 16, 2022

For two Sundays we get the privilege of working through the majestic Mark 13. To really engage it requires putting on your thinking cap! Like usual, this guide is an aide to help you get into the text, so tackle the questions *as you are able and have time*. You do not need to answer each one, so don't look at this sheet as an onerous homework assignment you'd rather not do. Just enjoy your time in the Scriptures.

Pastor Eric

After you read Mark 13 (at least verses 1-23), be prepared to share with your group your honest reaction to the text. Do its mysteries attract you to it, or do they make you shy away from it? Are you the type of person who is fascinated by the Book of Revelation or frustrated by it?

To prepare for your group, the best way is to read all of **Mark 13**. Again, if you can't make the time to read the whole chapter, read the first 23 verses.

Pay very close attention to the setting in which Jesus begins his long monologue. How does Mark 13 begin? After one of the disciples marvels at the amazing temple, Jesus responds in a pretty surprising way. What does he say in response?

Josephus Comments on Herod's Temple

Now the outward face of the temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's mind or their eyes: for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and, at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this Temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow; for, as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceedingly white Of its stones, some of them were forty-five cubits in length, five in height and six in breadth.

Where are Jesus and the four disciples when they take him aside and ask him two questions? The spot where they sit overlooked the incredible temple. What exactly are the two questions they ask him? Is there a difference between the two questions, or does the second simply expand on the first?

Examine Mark 13:5-8. Jesus begins by describing the way things are going to be before the temple is destroyed. What are the elements he identifies? Notice how in verse 7 Jesus exhorts them to not be alarmed when these things take place. What is Jesus trying to emphasize in the final statement of verse 7? How similar to our own times are those Jesus describes here?

Take a closer look at Mark 13.9-13. Jesus goes on to describe the way things will be before the temple is destroyed, in this section, as it relates to followers of Jesus. Describe what these disciples can expect to experience as Jesus' disciples. Again, How similar to our own times are those Jesus describes here?

During the sermon, I posited that the specific answer to the question posed in verse 4 comes in verses 14-23. The tricky part is verse 14 itself and the mysterious "abomination of desolation." That phrase would have registered with most Jews because it appears more than once as prophecies in the book of Daniel (9.27; 11.31; 12.11). It's mysterious there too, but the Jews knew that Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled in 168BC when evil Antiochus Epiphanes entered the temple, set up an altar (perhaps to Zeus), and offered sacrifices to it. But here Jesus is saying that the same sort of thing will happen during the lifespan of the disciples' generation (see verse 30).

In startling detail, what Jesus predicted *did* happen during the infamous *Jewish Wars* of AD66-70. Here's one example: "Now the Romans . . . upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their ensigns [pennant or flag] to the temple and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them" (Josephus, *Jewish Wars*).

Why was Jesus telling his disciples what was going to happen during their lifespan? What did he want them to do or think? Consider the repeated term "beware" in verses 5, 9, and 13. What is Jesus telling them to beware of? Even though the things Jesus predicted are history to us, are these things we should beware of as well?

What did you learn about Jesus? How should you respond to what you learned about Jesus?

Extra Credit: Why do some people take Jesus' teaching here to refer to his Second Coming? More on that next week!