
a *Grace Notes* course

The Gospel of Mark

an expositional Bible study

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Lesson 13

Mark 13:1-37

Grace Notes

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The Gospel of Mark
Lesson 13: Mark 13:1-37

Lesson Instructions

Lesson 13: Mark 13:1-37..... 13-4

Lesson 13 Quiz..... 13-18

Instructions for Completing the Lessons

There are sixteen (16) lessons in the MARK course curriculum, one lesson for each chapter.. There will be questions in the Quiz for each lesson on the topics that are named here.

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

Read the introduction to the study of Mark.

Study the Mark chapter for this lesson, by reading the verses and studying the notes. Be sure to read any other Bible passages that are called out in the notes.

Before taking the Quiz, **Review** all of the notes in the Mark lesson.

Go to the Quiz page and follow the instructions to complete all the questions on the quiz. The quiz is "open book". You may refer to all the notes and to the Bible when you take the test. But you should not get help from another person.

When you have completed the Quiz, be sure to SAVE your file. If your quiz file is lost, and that can happen at Grace Notes as well, you will want to be able to reproduce your work.

To send the Quiz back to Grace Notes, follow the instructions on the Quiz page.

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Chapter 13

It has been said that ignorance in life is inevitable. We simply cannot know everything there is to know. Stupidity, however is said to be optional and comes when we could know more and yet refuse to listen, refuse to learn.

Chapter 13 begins with the conclusion of a long day at the Temple where Jesus entered the arena of argumentation and rebuked, debated, questioned, and taught the religious leaders of Israel.

He took their best shot, and He won -

The disciples had been observing all this. It was not until the end of chapter 12 that we saw Jesus give attention to them. Up to that point they were observing and should have been listening, learning, thinking upon what the Lord said and what the Lord taught.

But like so many people, even Christians today, they listened but they did not learn, they were thinking but they were confused. As a result, a superfluous question is asked.

Mark 13:1

And as he was going out of the Temple -

The scene is set for us by this statement. After an entire day of debate with the religious leaders the Lord, now with His disciples departs. He is again with friends and the disciples are again with their master.

But a certain amount of tension is in the air. The disciples are very quiet. No one daring to ask the Lord questions regarding what was said that day.

They heard a lot of truth, but they did not understand a lot of what they heard. We might assume the questions would fly and that deep discussion would follow. That all that had been said that day would be examined, talked about, and questions would be answered.

But instead, a meaningless comment is made.

And one of His disciples said to Him, Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!

Often the questions we ask reveal not merely our interest in a certain subject, but our desire to avoid certain subjects.

Observations:

1. Questions, comments, statements can be intended to change the subject rather than seek truth.
2. In our attempt to avoid the spiritual issues which might deeply touch our lives, we ask superfluous questions and make meaningless statements.
3. The conventional Christian can talk a lot about religious things and thus avoid meaningful spiritual issues.
4. Paul described this manner of conversation and learning to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:5 and 7 as those who:

Hold to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these - always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

5. People will talk about their pastor, their programs, their building, their Sunday school teachers, their fellowships, their choirs and their music - but not about the person who really matters, Jesus Christ.

6. This avoidance of reality is a pretense regarding what the Christian Life is all about.

And pretense or pretending in the CHRISTIAN LIFE is a result of denial, a denial or divorcement from reality, and that comes from one of these three: Fear, anger, shame.

For the disciples the initial problem was fear. A simple fear of not understanding what the Lord had said and taught. This resulted in a denial of the deep things that were communicated by the Savior and led to pretense - Look at this fine building.

Mark 13:2

Jesus is going to bring the conversation back to reality, the important and deep spiritual truths that will affect their lives.

Mark Lesson 13

And Jesus said to him, Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

Jesus is going to use the focus of their attention, a building of blocks and stones, to shift their attention back to reality:

Do you see these great buildings? And great they were. The Temple of Herod was a massive structure, with numerous other buildings and quarters. The blocks that were used to build this building were massive, some weighing as much as 100 tons.

Next, He makes a remarkable statement: Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

The word for TORN DOWN refers to a taking apart, a destruction not by natural means but a result of demolition by invasion of hostile forces.

The Lord was looking ahead, prophetically, to 70 AD when Titus the Roman would invade Judea and destroy Jerusalem.

The prophetic picture painted by the Lord in this chapter looks to events that are near, and now past history for us, and events that are far, and still future for us:

Verses 2-13 Prophecy regarding the Church Age

Verses 13-37 Prophecy regarding the Tribulation

Mark 13:3

The Lord's statement of verse 2 has captured their attention. Now, four of the disciples seek further information:

And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew were questioning Him privately.

In his first major discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord was on a hillside. Now in this final discourse he is also on a hillside. The first dealt with the conditions of the Kingdom and this, the Olivet Discourse, deals with the coming of the kingdom.

Four disciples now come to Him: Peter and Andrew (brothers) and James and John (brothers).

Mark 13:4

Now they ask an important question, no longer statements of buildings and stones, regarding what man has done, but at what God will do:

Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?

The word SIGN is very specific in the Greek text. It looks at that which distinguishes one thing from another.

These disciples knew that hard times existed even then, that the Temple had been destroyed before and could be destroyed again. But what was the Lord talking about? What will distinguish the time he refers to from other difficult times?

By asking for that which will distinguish the time of these disciples were showing more common sense than many believers have today. They knew world events could imitate divine judgment, that even natural events could simulate God's work in bringing his ages to a close.

So they asked specifically, what will distinguish what you are talking about from all the other things that go on in the world?

Application: Believers today are very quick to look at world events or natural catastrophes and proclaim that the rapture is near, the end is at hand.

The disciples did not want to do this. They asked the Lord for wisdom, wisdom to distinguish the times and the seasons.

Mark 13:5-8

Jesus first describes what the signs will not be:

And Jesus began to say to them, See to it that no one misleads you. Many will come in My name, saying, I am He! and will mislead many. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end. For nation will arise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

Mark Lesson 13

Notice: The last phase of verse 8, these are not the signs, these are merely the beginning of the signs. Birth pains are not birth, they tell you birth will come. Morning sickness tells you that the birth pains will come, labor will eventually occur, but birth can be many months away from the upset stomach in the morning.

In the same way the conflict and catastrophes we experience tell us that there will be an end.

The first thing that Jesus tells them is that they must focus not on the events, not on what is going on in the world, but on Him. They must not be distracted:

See to it that no one misleads you. Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many.

JESUS LISTS THREE AREAS OF DISTRACTION IN vv 5-8:

1. Being distracted by those who claim to be the Messiah
2. Being distracted by international events and conflicts
3. Being distracted by natural events and calamities

So before he even begins to tell them about the signs (down in verse 14), he warns them about distraction -

The main distraction is to be drawn away from the person and the power of Christ.

Even in Jesus' day there were those who claimed to come in the power of God. A few even claimed to be the Messiah. But they did nothing more than distract and mislead.

Today and throughout the church age we have had false Christs, those who claim to have some hot line to God or even to be God's prophet, or the Christ.

They mislead the simple, the unsuspecting, the naïve.

Fallen men, living in a fallen world, live on the edge. On the edge of conflict, war, upheaval of nations.

Do not let these things frighten you. They must take place, that is the nature of fallen man. He

cannot bring lasting peace out of the chaos of a fallen world.

For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

This will occur so long as man is on fallen earth and under the control of Satan and his evil plan. Peace will not come apart from Christ.

The adversity of war is inevitable -

There will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

In addition to political and national conflict there will also be natural disasters. Earthquakes and famine.

But these are not the end, merely the beginning of the sign that the end is coming.

The wars, persecutions, the earthquakes, and the famines, all occurred even prior to 70 AD and the destruction of the Temple:

1. The Emperors Caligula, Claudius, and Nero all threatened war against the Jews.
2. In AD 38 in Alexandria the Jews were persecuted by the Romans. In Seleucia over 50 thousand Jews were killed.
3. Four major earthquakes rocked parts of the Roman empire all between the time of this prophecy and AD 70:
One in Crete (AD 46), one in Rome (AD 51), in Phrygia (AD 60), and in Campania (AD 63).
4. Also there were four major famines during this period, one which is mentioned in Acts 11:28 in Judea in AD 44.

But all these are just a beginning of the sign that will point to the end.

What do believers do with these events?

1. They are distracted trying to interpret God's plan in light of human and natural events.
2. But before that distraction occurs there is a prior distraction that has taken them away from the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. When we focus on Him, looking unto Jesus who is not only the author of our faith but the

Mark Lesson 13

finisher of our faith, we will know that He is in control.

4. When we see that He is Lord, we will know that He is greater than the wars, the earthquakes, and the famines. The Lord is Lord, he is in control.

5. When your eyes are on Him, there is no distraction, there is no fear, even when the calamity of human events turns against you -

Do not allow:

1. False teachers and false Christs to distract you
2. International strife and conflict
3. Natural disasters
4. Do not even allow persecution to take away your focus on the person of Christ.

We live in a fallen world, among fallen men, but we serve a risen Savior.

All the prophecy given in this Chapter is designed to do one thing, to focus attention, to give glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus and His disciples have come to the mount of Olives, across the brook Kidron from the Temple.

Upon leaving the Temple one disciple made a superfluous comment about the magnificence of the Temple. Jesus used this meaningless and distracting statement to bring attention to what God will do prophetically.

After crossing over to the side of the mount of Olives, four disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, come to the Lord and ask when will this occur -

With that the Lord does three things:

1. In verses 5-8 He tells them how easily it is to be distracted by people claiming to come in the power of God, by international events, and by natural disasters.
2. Secondly he describes the persecution, the problems, the adversity that will be a part of their ministry and the up coming church age (Mark 13:9-13).
3. And then he tells them of the prophetic plan of God. Which deals with events still future for even

us and events that are a part of the tribulation period (Mark 13:14-37).

I think that it is very important for our proper perspective on prophecy to recognize what the Lord took time to explain even before he mentioned future events.

He warned the disciples, and this is a warning to us, that they could be distracted by attempting to interpret God's plan in light of current events rather than the Word of God.

Through the centuries Christians have taken note of some event or some person and sincerely believed that the rapture was due any moment. They have sold all, abandoned responsibilities, and some have even sat of roof tops or climbed a mountain so they could get a head start to heaven. That is distraction.

You cannot be in Bible class learning about the Lord if you are on some roof top.

The second warning the Lord gives us is regarding persecution. Through the centuries Christians have faced persecution. Some have even been put to death for their faith. How easy it might be for the believer to begin to think that God has abandoned His plan, that God is no longer in control, that He has lost his grip on the human race.

In the midst of persecution, prophecy should give us confidence, a confident hope that God is in control and no matter how bad things may seem as mankind turns against God and the believer, it will get worse when God pours out his wrath upon planet earth.

Mark 13:9

Begins the warning regarding persecution:

But be on your guard; for they will deliver you to the courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them.

This is a very interesting statement. The Lord gives a command to be on the look out but then gives a list of three things that will happen to believers:

Mark Lesson 13

First, the three mentions of persecution. Each of the verbs used in these statements are future tense which indicates a definite future fact, not merely a possibility as does the English future tense.

1. For others will deliver you to councils and you will be beaten in the synagogues.

Two connected statements: Delivered to the courts and beaten in the synagogues.

This is a warning of religious persecution. This was very real for the disciples. In the book of Acts we read of how the Jews opposed the Christians, bringing them before their councils and even beating some.

Through the church age the Christian has often been opposed by other Christians. One of the first great reformers, an ancestor of mine, Jan Huss of Bohemia, was burned at the stake in Prague because he proclaimed a Grace salvation.

Even today the believer who lives by grace will be persecuted, with cutting remarks, rejection, and judging. This adversity sometimes comes from other believers.

When it does you deal with it by way of principle. It was the religious leaders of Jesus' day who opposed Him, who persecuted Him, who put Him on the Cross to die.

2. The third statement looks at persecution before the civil and criminal courts.

And you will stand before governors and kings -

This happened to the disciples as they were dragged into the courts and accused of disloyalty to Caesar. Even today there are nations that view being a Christian as a crime against the state and impose penalties against believers.

Our attitude towards this adversity must be the attitude that Christ our Lord had towards His adversaries. God is in control. Our lives and our destinies are in His hands.

Hebrews 13:6 That we confidently say, The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?

But now we need to go back to the initial statement in the verse and consider a problem:

The Lord tells the disciple: Be on your guard:

Now why would we be on guard, BLEPW _be on the look out for something that was surely going to happen?

Normally you tell someone to look out in order to prevent something from occurring. But the future tenses in these statements makes them inevitable.

Adversity in life is inevitable. Through the 2000 year history of the CHURCH AGE believers have been persecuted. It could happen to us. In minor ways and even in more severe ways.

So what are we to be looking out for?

1. First, that we are not distracted in the midst of persecution. Be on guard that persecution doesn't throw you or shift your focus from the one who is the solution, Jesus Christ.

I am sure Peter had this concept in mind when he wrote:

1 Peter 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

2. Secondly, we are to be on guard, undistracted, so that any persecution we might face will be turned to a testimony of Christ.

This persecution need not be without meaning and purpose. The Lord adds that this adversity will occur for His sake and as a testimony to the ones who persecute you.

The way you handle the persecution you receive can be a testimony of the faithfulness of Christ, that He is your strength, and in times of great adversity, you do not turn adversity to stress but handle it according to principles of doctrine, the very mind of Christ.

Mark 13:10

This is a verse that is often taken out of context:

And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations (Gentiles).

Some have taken this to mean that the Lord cannot return for his bride the church until all the world has been evangelized.

Mark Lesson 13

And while the greater context of Mark 13 is the return of the Lord, specifically the Second Advent, the immediate context is the persecution of believers.

NOTE: The immediate preceding and following verses.

We have a connective KAI which links the evangelizing of the Gentiles to the testimony of Christ by believers under persecution.

The preposition is EIS which can be translated: "with a view towards." The events of verse 9 occur with a view towards the result in verse 10.

The word FIRST is PRWTOS which can mean first in an order of events but also first in importance.

In the Church Age, God sees the evangelism of the unbeliever as of primary importance.

So much so, that persecution of His people, which at first may seem to be a negative, becomes an opportunity to be a testimony of Christ to the Nations.

You must be on your guard, on the look out, knowing that persecution will come.

Mark 13:11

Here is another verse that is often taken out of context and used to dismiss preparation for communication. There are some groups who actually take pride in their ignorance. Their pastors do not go to school, seminary, they do not prepare for their messages, and they boast in this.

What is the context of this promise?

And when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.

The context and setting: When they arrest you and deliver you up before the courts -

Then a warning and a promise that is to give you comfort:

1. Do not be anxious beforehand about what you are to say:

Being ANXIOUS is to WORRY, to fret about the situation and what you are to say when the courts examine you.

The Lord is telling us not to worry!

2. Whatever is given (dative) you IN THAT HOUR, this you are to speak.

For you see (GAR) you are not the one speaking but (ALLA) the Holy Spirit.

Here we have a promise that was given to the disciples who would be arrested and be before the courts. In the book of Acts we can see the fulfillment of this prophecy.

These statements and promises of the Lord are all prior to the first sign that is given in verse 14 which means that these have application to the entire CHURCH AGE

If you were arrested for your faith and brought into court, you could rely upon this promise.

Mark 13:12

But all persecution will not be from strangers. Some will be from sources you would least suspect, possibly your own family:

And brother will deliver brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

While this describes what will await the disciples as they proclaim Christ, it also has bearing on the entire CHURCH AGE when believers will suffer persecution. But the ultimate fulfillment will be during the Tribulation, when the Jewish community of believers, having believed in Christ following the rapture, will be persecuted, and families will be torn apart. Treachery will come from even the closest of sources.

In recent world history in nations where being a Christian was considered to be a crime against the state or at least a mental illness sufficient for long term hospitalization (in Siberia), brothers turned against brothers and parents against children and even children against parents. In China, following the inglorious revolution, children were encouraged to turn in their believing parents, and in the killing fields of Laos it was often the

Mark Lesson 13

children who pulled the trigger against their parents.

As great as the pain may be it is handled on the outside by the application of principle:

1. Jesus told us it was going to happen
2. Jesus also told us that:

Matthew 10:37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Mark 13:13

The verse brings these warnings and promises to a close as Jesus prepares to answer the question asked by the disciples back in verse 4:

And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

The specific application is to the Jews who have been the only people hated by the nations. This hatred will increase during the Tribulation and be directed at those who are racially Jews but, spiritually, believers in Christ.

Even now in the church age we have an application to the Christian. There have been times when being Christian invoked hatred from others.

But we are to endure to the end that we might be saved.

SAVED here is not a spiritual salvation that occurs when we believe in Christ but a deliverance.

Kenneth Wuest states: Salvation here is not spiritual, no one is ever saved by enduring anything, but it is physical, physical protection and well-being for those who have endured the sufferings -

ENDURANCE is UPOMENW and is aorist, active, participle.

The aorist tense looks at endurance during a specific time of trouble and persecution. The point of time application of a principle of truth that keeps adversity from becoming stress.

The participle sees it as an action that attends something else and the something else here is the

life of faith. Do you believe that if you endure in Christ you will be delivered? That is accepted by faith.

UPOMENW is used as the expression of HOPE. We have a confident assurance of our eternal destiny and that is our confident hope. Endurance is keeping our eyes fixed on the goal, eternity with Jesus Christ.

The things the Lord is describing in these verse are those things that rob us of our endurance through distraction:

1. The false Christ's and those who claim to come in the power of God
2. World events, wars and rumors of wars
3. Natural disasters that cause us to think God is no longer in control
4. Persecution from other believers and from the World
5. Betrayal and persecution from those closest to us, our own families
6. And the ever presence of death

Adversity in life must never be a distraction from our goal, we are to endure because we have a confident assurance that God is in control.

A little statement appeared in a denominational journal that stated: Every tomorrow can be grasped by one of two handles. By the handle of worry and anxiety or the handle of faith.

In our passage the Lord Jesus Christ is telling his disciples of some terrible things that are to come but in doing so he encourages them to grasp hold of the future by the handle of faith.

One of the most important, and yet often neglected principles of understanding prophecy, is to put the prophecy in its context. This is especially true when the prophetic pronouncement is a response to a statement or question as is the case here in Mark 13 and the parallel passages of Matthew 24 and 25 and Luke 21.

Remember the statement that begins this chapter: A statement of distraction as one of the disciples starts talking about the greatness of the Temple,

Mark Lesson 13

avoiding the deep content of the Lord's messages that day.

With that statement Jesus now wants to teach his disciples to not be distracted from truth, i.e., wrapped up in buildings.

So in verse 2 He states: Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another which will not be torn down.

In order to focus attention on the plan of God, Jesus talks about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

This brings us to a question by Peter, Andrew, James, and John:

Verse 4, Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?

It is actually two questions: When (looking for a time), and what will be the authenticating sign (looking for a sign)?

The Lord answers the second question first and then goes back to the first question.

In verses 5-13, the Lord talks about what the signs will not be:

In this portion of His message He gives a warning against distraction:

1. Do not be distracted by false Christs, international events, natural disasters, persecution, or betrayal
2. These events are afflictions that are coincidental to living and being a believer
3. The warning in verse 9, "Be on guard" means to be on guard against distraction and failure to use adversities in our life to present Christ and be a testimony to others.
4. These events point to the signs and the absolute assurance that these prophecies will come to pass. They are like the morning sickness that tells you that you will have labor pains, and then labor pains that foretell the reality of birth
5. **Principle:** Do not be distracted trying to find signs in international events, like the war in the Persian Gulf, in earthquakes, in the famines of Africa, in the persecution and betrayal of believers.

Application: Keep focused on the Lord Jesus Christ and endure in your confident hope that God's plan is sure.

Mark 13:14

But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be [let the reader understand], then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

The rather cryptic statement as made by Mark for the sake of the Roman audience to which he writes. He cloaks the presence of the abomination of desolation standing in the Temple

He is not willing to be specific because of the tension between Rome and Israel that already exists at the time of his writing.

The other Gospel writers did not have a need to be cryptic:

Matthew 24:15 mentions the Holy Place, the Temple

Luke 21:20 specifically states that armies will surround Jerusalem.

So we ask, when is this sign going to occur?

Three events are referred to, one past, one in the life time of the disciples, and one yet future:

1. The past fulfillment of this was a prophetic event for Daniel when he spoke of it in Daniel 11:31

And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

This was first fulfilled in 167 BC when Antiochus Epiphanes the Syrian ruler, erected a statue to Zeus in the Temple and sacrificed a pig on the altar. This is the story of the Maccabean revolt.

2. Now the disciples, knowing Jewish history, would have thought that the prophecy of Daniel had been fulfilled. But there is often more than one fulfillment of prophecy. There are, at times, minor fulfillments that lead to the major fulfillment.

3. Since Jesus spoke of this as yet future, it is to be fulfilled again:

Mark Lesson 13

In the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, within the lifetime of these disciples, the Jewish Zealots would take over the Temple in AD 67 and establish an unqualified priest as high priest.

At that time the Christians of Jerusalem would flee the city and go to Pella, a city in what is now Jordan.

4. But there is to be another, future time when this and all these events will be completely fulfilled:

The dictator of Palestine during the tribulation, the second beast of Revelation 13, the false prophet, will set an image of the Antichrist in the Temple, the dictator of the revived Roman empire, and demand its worship and even cause it to speak (Revelation 13:14-15).

5. So for the disciples there will be a near fulfillment and for future Israel, a far fulfillment.

Here is the principle we have to apply as we study this portion of prophecy:

While the Lord is talking about events that have to do with the latter days, the tribulation, there is also interpretation for the events prior to and including the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Romans.

What I want to show you in this passage of prophecy is the mental attitude of Christ and the attitude that Christ wants the believer to have regarding the future that is in God's hands.

The first thing we see is that in His humanity Jesus received this prophetic information from the Father. This was revealed to the humanity of Christ and not part of the omniscience of His deity.

In verse 32 Jesus tells his disciples that the day and hour of his return is unknown even to Him:

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

From His humanity Jesus has a very hard message to give. A message that includes desolation of the Temple, believers fleeing to the mountains, tribulation, false Christs, the darkening of the sun and the moon, the heavens being shaken, and His return in power to judge and glory to be worshipped.

This bad news is not given to frighten or to create worry and anxiety, nor is given to scare people into faith in Christ, but it is given for two reasons:

1. To demonstrate that God the Father is in control of the destiny of the human race.
2. And secondly, that God the Son, cares for us, has compassion on us, and in any difficult situation, in any adversity, will provide His plan and His power for us.

We can see in this prophetic message seven aspects of the humanity of Christ:

1. Compassion on those who have placed their faith in Him
2. Faith in the Father's plan
3. A desire to not see the believer distracted
4. A confidence that the Father is in control
5. The power He has to act on behalf of believers
6. The personal faith He has in the Word of God
7. And the concern He has that believers stay on the alert.

Mark 14b-18

The compassion of Christ in the midst of Crisis:

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. And let him who is on the housetop not go down, or enter in, to get anything out of his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days! But pray that it may not happen in the winter. For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall.

At the desecration of the Temple in 70 AD and the future desecration in the Tribulation, God allows the evil of man controlled by Satan to be unleashed on the earth. This is accompanied by His divine wrath on unrighteousness. Believers are to flee to the mountains of Edom, Moab, and Ammon.

While this is for their safety it is also difficult, and when calling believers to do a difficult thing, the

Mark Lesson 13

Lord is compassionate toward that woman who is pregnant, and those who have nursing babies, that this flight not be during the hardship of winter.

The tribulation that is to come will be difficult but in the midst of that harsh time the believer has the compassion of Christ.

Application: We may find ourselves in some harsh times as believers in Christ in the CHURCH AGE, but Christ has a love, a tenderness, a compassion towards us.

Mark 13:19,20

We see the Lord's faith in the Father's plan and His faith in the Father for us -

For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created, until now, and never shall. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no life would have been saved (SWZW); but for the sake of the elect whom He chose, He shortened the days.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD stands as one of history's most horrid invasions. But even greater horrors are to come when Satan attempts to rule the earth and God's wrath is poured out in judgment.

Man's inhumanity towards man will not be fully revealed until the tribulation period. We can truly say right now, that no matter how bad things get, they will get worse (but we, the CHURCH AGE believer will not be here).

We see in verse 20 Jesus' faith in the Father's plan.

The Lord, here referring to the one who is Lord over these events, the Father, will cut short the time of destruction.

1. In 70 AD this occurred when Titus Flavius was left as the commander over the Roman forces in Palestine while his father, Vespasian, was recalled to Rome to become the Emperor. Titus quickly brought the war to an end with the capture and destruction of Jerusalem. Many had predicted a much longer war.

2. In the tribulation period, the time is cut short by another invasion, the invasion of Jesus Christ, with us and the elect angels, to the earth. The

second advent cuts short man's and Satan's evil plan for planet earth.

So while man and even Satan may inflict their reign or terror on the earth, the final outcome is under the control of God.

Application: Our Savior had faith in the Father's plan for us, and we can have that same faith, God is in control.

Mark 12:21,22

For a second time in this chapter, Jesus gives a warning of false Christs. This will be especially pertinent in the tribulation as the antichrist will try to lure believers back under his control by putting out the rumor that Christ had returned.

This is the warning not to be fooled or distracted:

And then if anyone says to you, Behold, here is the Christ; or, Behold, He is there ;do not believe him; for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order, if possible, to lead the elect astray.

One important observation: The false Christs (Antichrists) and the false prophets will show signs and wonders in order to distract the elect.

Application: Even Satan can perform a miracle, he can show man signs and wonders. Do not believe the lie, stick with the truth.

Mark 12:23

Another note of Compassion is given:

But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.

The prophecy is the advance message that prepares believers for hard times that are ahead. We are to be on the lookout that our faith is not shaken.

Mark 12:24,25

Jesus has confidence that the Father is in control of all things, and that control extends from earth to heaven:

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from

Mark Lesson 13

heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken.

The sun and the moon reference God's power over creation.

The stars falling from heaven and the powers of the heavens refer to angelic creation. And while there is judgment on rebellious man during the tribulation, there is also judgment on rebellious angels who followed Satan.

God controls all of it. Don't you think he also can control your life, your circumstances, your destiny?

Mark 13:26,27

The Son has the power to act on behalf of believers:

And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth, to the farthest end of heaven.

The THEY refers to the people living during the Tribulation.

Here we see that the Son of Man has the power to act on behalf of the believers of the Tribulation.

He also has the power to act on our behalf right now.

Mark 13:28,29

Jesus has predicted the events of the second half of the Tribulation, from verse 14, with the mention of the abomination of desolation, to verse 27 with the regathering of Israel at the Second Advent.

The parable he now gives deals with the signs of those events. These are the signs during the second half of the Tribulation which predict the coming of the Son of God at the Second Advent.

Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. Even so, you too, when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

Mark 13:30

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

The word GENERATION is GENEAE_fem, sing, nom. and of the eight times it is so used in the Gospels the word would best be translated RACE.

Promise: The Jewish Race, this race, will not pass away until all these things are accomplished.

Mark 13:31

A SECOND PROMISE:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

The word of God is the greatest reality we have, greater than the events of history and even the human events of the future.

Principle: You can always trust the Word of God

Mark 13:32

Now verse 32 ends this paragraph with a statement that the appointed time of these events is unknown, even to the angels and the humanity of Christ:

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

And so not knowing the appointed time, we are left with a question.

Knowing that God is in control of the future, how should we then live? We do not know when, but we know what will happen.

The prophet Ezekiel wrote at a time when Israel was separated from the land, captive in Babylon. The people had the sum total of the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many of the minor prophets. They knew that God had a plan for Israel. They knew that one day they or their descendants would return to the land of promise. They would go home.

Today we are in a land that is not our own, we are citizens of a greater, eternal kingdom. We are citizens of heaven. We are in the World although not of the world.

Mark Lesson 13

When the people of Ezekiel's day heard the message to depend and trust in God, His ways, His grace, and His plans asked a question that is worthy of consideration today:

Ezekiel 33:10 How should we then live -

Mark wrote his gospel account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ mainly to Romans, Gentiles. In it he includes this chapter relating the message of Christ given on the Mount of Olives. Matthew, writing to Jews gives a much more extensive account of this Olivet Discourse.

The Jews as a race were very involved with signs and the events that were to come upon Jerusalem in 70 AD and the events that are yet to come upon Jerusalem during the Tribulation. This demanded more information to be given to God's Old Testament nation.

Mark, on the hand, includes this chapter to establish a number of principles. While used by the disciples and other believers prior to 70 AD, when the Romans would invade and destroy Jerusalem, they also have application to us as Christians in the CHURCH AGE

From this chapter and the study of its prophetic message we have already established a number of principles:

1. Distraction occurs when we try to interpret prophetic events in light of world affairs and natural disasters
2. Persecution and betrayal must not distract the believer but present an opportunity for evangelism
3. God in His omnipotent power controls even the future. He is in control now and forever.
4. Jesus Christ has the power to act on our behalf both now and in the future
5. Neither men, nor angels, nor even the humanity of Christ knows the day or the hour of these prophetic events.

In light of these principles the next paragraph in Mark 13 answers the question - How should we then live?

Mark 13:32

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

Some have taken this to mean that while we do not know the literal day or the literal hour we can know, in the broader scope of time, when the Lord will return.

My question is how broad do we want to get? If the hour or day is unknown, then do we assume we are to know the week, the month, or the year, decade or century?

Throughout the scriptures the word DAY is often used to designate an unspecified period of time. The day of judgment could be a decade, the day of the Lord is certainly more than a 24 hour period.

At times the word day is used for a literal 24 hour period and at other times as an extended period of time.

In the next verse and in the parable that follows we see this day and hour referring to an unknown period of time. Just as the Lord states - no one knows but the Father.

Mark 13:33

Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is.

The words AND PRAY found in the KJV are not in the Greek New Testament

The word TIME is KAIROS which can be used for a short time, a long time, or an unspecified time.

That is, no one knows the time and therefore, we have two commands given in this verse:

1. Take heed:
2. Keep on the alert:

But these are not the only commands in this section. A third one is coming up in verses 35 and 37 so we will examine all three in a few minutes.

The reason for the commands is that the believer in the tribulation period does not know when these things will occur.

Mark Lesson 13

Mark 13:34-36

To illustrate our obedience to these commands the Lord gives the disciples a short parable:

It is like a man, away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning-- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

We begin the parable with the relative adverb *WS* indicating a near comparison. This is not exact, but does illustrate the point.

The adverb assumes the words *IT IS LIKE*, and relates the parable to unfolding events of prophecy.

1. The man is the Lord Jesus who goes away from home, as the Lord is away from us right now.

2. Upon leaving his house he puts his slaves (*DOULOS*) in charge.

CHARGE is *EXOUSIA* _authority that is delegated to others.

In this same way the Lord has delegated to us His authority.

3. With that authority we have responsibility: Authority without responsibility is despotism, and our Lord has not delegated authority to us in vain.

This divine authority delegated to us is part of what makes us complete in Christ:

Colossians 2:10 And in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.

4. To each one is assigned his work: *ERGON* :

1) The work we have as a result of the delegated authority of Christ is both corporate and individual

2) All believers share in three ministries: The ministry of witnessing (reconciliation), the ministry of encouragement, and the ministry of teaching or passing on doctrine to believers.

3) In addition, every believer is given spiritual gifts to fulfill specific ministries within, to, and out from the local church.

5. Spiritual gifts were initially given by Christ at the time of his ascension to the right hand of the Father. As with the parable, it was upon leaving.

Ephesians 4:8 When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men.

After the initial gifts were given by the Lord, the Holy Spirit perpetuates the gifts in the Church Age:

I Corinthians 12:7 and 11 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good - But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

6. The porter is the doorkeeper in the ancient world who guards the entrance to the house. This can parallel the Holy Spirit in the *CHURCH AGE* who has sealed and secured believers and continues to guard them.

Therefore, be on the alert-- for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, at cockcrowing, or in the morning--

The word *ALERT* here is different than in v 33, but the same as the word found in v 37 ending this section:

So we have then three commands: Three things we are to be doing while the Lord is away and we await for Him to return:

1. v 33 *TAKE HEED*: This is *BLEPW* which is used to catch the attention. In the context of Mark 13 it is used to catch the attention of the believer so that he is not distracted by persecution but rather uses persecution to make a testimony for Christ.

We are forewarned against distraction by having information. We have been told that events which could bring distraction will occur.

So the first command is to keep an eye out for the things that will distract.

2. v 33 is the second command: *BE ON THE ALERT* or *BE WAKEFUL*:

Mark Lesson 13

This is AGRU-PNEW _which means more than mere wakefulness. It means to be awake but also to be intently watching for something.

In our context we are to be intently looking for the Lord's return.

As we live the Christ Centered Life, we keep one eye on the future knowing that in the future of the next moment, the Lord might return for us.

This intent watchfulness gives us three things:

- 1) Motivation: We are motivated to our jobs, complete the task, finish the race. We do not know how much time we have.
 - 2) Efficiency of time: As Paul said in Ephesians 5 we are to redeem the time.
 - 3) Encouragement and Comfort: We know that the Lord is coming for us, and with confident expectation we have that Hope.
3. The third command is found in v 35 and v 37 and is translated BE ON THE ALERT but is a different word than found in v 33.

In the Roman army to sleep on watch was a capital crime. Not only for the centurion but for the whole unit.

It includes alertness, vigilance, being fully awake.

The idea of this command is to be on guard, to use everything available to you to do your job.

So we then live under these three commands:

1. We are on the lookout for things that would distract us from what is really important in life. our relationship of faith and friendship with Christ.

2. We anticipate with confidence that He is coming again. That for all eternity we will be with Him and that is our destiny.

3. And we stay on the watch, utilizing the assets that are available to us as we await our master.

Regretfully, all believers are not living under those three commands:

Lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.

Some believers are asleep and when you are asleep you are unaware of what is going on around you.

Paul saw this as a problem in Ephesus so he wrote:

Ephesians 5:14 Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.

The sleeping believer goes through life wondering what happened, what is happening, and what will happen.

Mark 13:37

Jesus tells us that these commands are not just for the disciples, not just for the believers in the Tribulation, but for all believers . . . for you and for me:

And what I say to you I say to all, Be on the alert!

The Lord is too gracious to ever do this, but I envision believers in heaven walking around with a sign on them that says - I was asleep throughout my whole life.

Let us not sleep, be on the lookout, be alert, stay the watch.

Mark Lesson 13 Quiz

Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

To answer a question, type your response in the space provided after the word "Answer:". A question may be True/False, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer type.

The last question requires you to write one or two paragraphs in "essay" form. Use the space provided; it will expand to accommodate your response.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the quiz, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the quiz. Enter your answers in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your completed Quiz, the next lesson will be sent to you, by the same means you received this one. EXCEPT: when you have sent in the FINAL QUIZ, we will send your certificate to you, by regular mail.

Mark Lesson 13

Questions on Mark Lesson 13

1. It is possible to have a form of godliness, to appear to be a spiritual person, yet have no spiritual power in the life. [True/False]

Answer:

2. In the early part of this chapter, how does Jesus bring the disciples' attention back to reality?

Answer:

3. To what historical event was Christ referring when he said that the Temple would be torn down?

Answer:

4. What are the three areas of distraction against which Jesus warns his disciples?

Answer:

5. How can a Christian avoid being misled by "false Christs" or "false prophets?"

Answer:

6. Is it possible for a spiritual Christian to avoid persecution?

Answer:

7. According to 1 Peter, what is to be our attitude in times of suffering?

Answer:

8. You don't have to study the Bible to be a preacher; you can just open your mouth and the Holy Spirit will speak through you. [True/False]

Answer:

9. In what year did Antiochus Epiphanes desecrate the Temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar?

Answer:

10. "...in those days, after that tribulation, the _____ will be _____, the _____ will not give its _____, and the _____ will be _____ from heaven." [Fill in the blanks]

Answer:

11. What was the sign Jesus mentioned, showing that summer was near?

Answer:

12. God's Word will no longer be needed or available after the heaven and earth pass away. [True/False]

Answer:

Mark Lesson 13

13. Even the angels do not know when Christ is going to return to earth? [True/False]

Answer:

14. At what point in time did Christ give spiritual gifts to men?

Answer:

15. What is the key motivation for Christians to be alert, vigilant, and fully awake?

Answer:

End of Quiz