

Study of the Gospel of Mark

Chapter 13 (Part 1)

Background

While we are still considering the events of Tuesday of Holy Week, this section records the words of Jesus spoken to His disciples after they left the temple in Jerusalem to go to the Mount of Olives. For this reason, these words of Jesus have been called the "Olivet Discourse." In these words Jesus deals with specific questions which were raised by the disciples after hearing Jesus discuss the coming desolation of Jerusalem (see Matthew 23:37-39).

1. Throughout the years many Bibles students have struggled to understand the words of Jesus in this section. Before we begin it is very important to note carefully the questions which the disciples asked and to which Jesus is responding. What are the questions which the disciples had? (Read Mark 13:1-4 and also Matthew 24:1-3; Luke 21:1-7)

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

2. There are two particular events that are being discussed in this chapter. Both were in the future for the disciples, but Jesus has spoken of both of them in the past as He prepared His disciples for what would be coming in the future. What are the two events which Jesus discusses here, and about which the disciples asked? If we remember that Jesus is dealing with two distinct events in this chapter, it will help us better understand and apply His words in our own lives.

- A. _____
- B. _____

3. Read Mark 13:1-13. There will be many "signs" which would precede both of the events Jesus discusses here. List these signs in the first column below.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| A. <u>War</u> | A. <u>Genesis 14:1-16; Exodus 1:8-10</u> |
| B. _____ | B. _____ |
| C. _____ | C. _____ |
| D. _____ | D. _____ |
| E. _____ | E. _____ |
| F. _____ | F. _____ |
| G. _____ | G. _____ |

4. Many people today refer to the "signs of the times" and say that because the signs mentioned above are all prevalent in our day, the time for Jesus' return must be close. In reality we find that these "signs" have been prevalent since the fall into sin. Go back to the list above and record some examples from the Old Testament where these same "signs" took place. List the Old Testament Bible reference in the second column for the sign you recorded in the first column. These "signs" are simply reminders of our sin and God's coming judgment, not indicators of how soon He might be returning.

5. Jesus warns of two dangers in these verses. The first is false Christs (13:5-6, 21-22), and the second is the persecution which followers of Jesus will suffer on His behalf (13:9-13). Along with these warnings Jesus also states God's purpose in all this which is two-fold. What is God's two fold purpose as stated by Jesus in these verses?

A. _____

B. _____

6. Read Mark 13:14-23. These verses refer to a specific event in history about which the disciples asked. Note the key phrase at the beginning: "those who are in Judea flee..." (Mark 13:14). What event is Jesus describing here?

7. Jesus describes this event as being unique in the history of the world - there would never be anything like it again. Why would God allow such a horrendous catastrophe to come upon His people? (Read Jesus' words in Matthew 23:37-39; Mark 12:1-11; Luke 13:1-9.)

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus recorded a history of the Jewish people through their destruction by the Roman legions in 70AD. His record reveals the truthfulness of Jesus' words in this section. While much of his description is very graphic, it is valuable for Christians to be acquainted with. You can find the works of Josephus available in book form at most bookstores, or you can read it online for free here: <http://www.ccel.org/jj/josephus/works/JOSEPHUS.HTM>

8. Finally, Jesus warns again of false prophets and false Christs who would lead people astray from God's truth. Jesus says that these leaders may even perform signs and wonders which will reveal their power. List some examples of false Christs who perform signs and wonders which often do lead people to follow them.

