

Mark 13:1-4

“The expectant life”

- I. **Introduction**
- II. **Vs. 1-4 When will these things be?**

I. **Introduction**

We know in chapter 13 very quickly in the text that the scene has changed, as Mark tells us that Jesus went out of the Temple, (*prior to this they had been in the temple as Jesus was being interrogated*). According to Mark one of His disciples took the opportunity to point out the grandeur of the buildings with their massive stones, (*both Matthew and Luke tell us that there were more than one that approached Jesus but apparently one did the speaking.*) Some of those stones are 40 feet in length and 18 feet high. Verse three gives the location of this chapter as the Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple. The thirteenth chapter of Mark along with Matthew chapter 24-25 and Luke 21:5-36 is often referred too as the “*Olivet Discourse*” do to the location in which Jesus spoke these words. Remember that Jesus was in the middle of the “*Passion Week*” only a day or two away from His trial, crucifixion and resurrection. We will be spending some weeks in this chapter for two very important reasons:

1. **First it will require a great deal of research and study to unlock its truths.**
2. **Second, any section that deals with the “end of the world” and the return of Jesus always carries a great deal of interest.**

We are going to begin our study into the 13th chapter of Mark with “*general observations*” both of this chapter in Mark as well as comparisons with the other two accounts in Matthew chapters 24-25 and Luke 21:5-36. Along the way it will be

necessary to outline this chapter which will aid in our investigation. I want all of you to be aware of this up front as this mornings study will serve as an overview of the passage, with only a direct examination of a very few verses as time won't permit us going further this week.

II. Vs. 1-4 When will these things be?

Vs. 1 Our first order of business is to establish the “**clear context**” of the passage. The comment issued by one of the disciples of “*Teacher see what manner of stones and what buildings are here*” causes us to ask and answer some important questions that will in the end clarify Jesus’ words in this chapter.

- a. First, we know that this comment by one of the disciples ***followed directly upon Jesus words with regards to the Scribes*** and the danger of not being devoted to Christ. It seems as though Jesus words left an impression that wasn't missed upon the disciples as Jesus had been particularly hard on the Jewish religion and religious elite.
- b. Second, Matthew's gospel tells us that Jesus disciples ***initiated*** this by coming up to Jesus to “***show Him the buildings of the temple.***” I find that very interesting as Jesus was no tourist. He wasn't someone who had just arrived to the city who needed to have the details brought out to Him. Jesus was as aware of the buildings if not more so than they were. ***So what was the purpose of making that statement?***

These two facts of:

- **A delegation of disciples coming to Jesus to point out the architectural details of the temple buildings**
- **Following an extended teaching of Jesus against Jewish religion, sets the context as an “*intervention*” of sorts.**

This makes this statement of the disciples directly related to Jesus words about the scribe and about religion. It is a statement that seeks to put a positive spin on 1st century Judaism; contrasting on all the negative statements that Jesus had been saying. A way of saying, “*Look Jesus, religion ain't all bad, it sure can make impressive buildings!*” To

these patriotic disciples they must have viewed Jesus words more of an insult and better aimed at the Roman oppressors than their captors. That is further brought out in the fact that they must have been even more surprised by Jesus' comments in verse 2 as they send two sets of brothers, who were all a part of the inner circle to find out further what He had meant by the statement.

Vs. 2 Jesus' reply acknowledged the impressive nature of the temple but at the same time spoke of its complete demolition. What's interesting is the accuracy of Jesus prophetic words of "*Not one stone shall be left upon another; that shall not be thrown down.*" These words speak of a ***gradual destruction*** that didn't occur completely in 70 A.D. Instead they wouldn't be completed for 65 years later in 135 A.D. after one last rebellion that the Romans leveled the temple leaving only the bald platform behind.

Vs. 3-4 The disciples were understandably troubled by Jesus prophecy as they sent a delegation of the two sets of brothers to where He was seated on the Mount of Olives. Their inquiry was to ask Him further just what He meant with regards to the "***timing of this prophecy***". *They didn't come to debate the truth of His words* their curiosity was about "**WHEN**" it would occur and "**WHAT**" would be the sign. ***Well over 2000 years have come and gone and these are still the same questions that people have always wanted to know. With every succeeding generation and increasingly greater "signs" people have been expecting to see this fulfilled in their life time. What's interesting is that starting with the disciples every generation has thought that the events they were presently experiencing indicated that Jesus was coming back in their life time.***

I can't help but think that this fact is by design as we shall discover in Jesus' final warnings in verses 35-37 where Jesus says, "*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-- lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" I believe that Jesus would have all of His followers **live with expectant hearts**, living in the moment of His soon return, with a light hold on the world.

Though Jesus will answer the "**WHEN** and **WHAT**" questions He does so by first bracketing this passage with warnings as we note that His statements start with the warning "**take heed**" in verse 5 and end with another "**take heed**" warning in verse 33, followed by two "**watches**" in verse 35, 37. **There are in fact four sections in this passage that tell us "WHEN and WHAT" the signs are that this prophecy is about to happen.** Before we look at this if we want to get the clearest picture of the meaning behind Jesus' words we would need to to examine each of the accounts of the "*parallel passages*" found in Matthew chapter 24-25 and Luke chapter 21 verse 5-36. **Each of the gospel writers select different aspects of Jesus teaching to emphasize specific things to their readers.**

- **Matthew's spends the most amount of time recording the "Olivet Discourse". He is the only writer to record the two parables of the "Ten Virgins" and "The Talents" as well as the judgment of the gentile nations all found in the 25th chapter. As such his focus is on what's going to happen to Israel.**
- **Luke is the only gospel writer who writes of the fall of Jerusalem and the future captivity and dispersion of the Jews and the domination of the nation by gentiles, for thousands of years; which coincidentally ended in 1948.**
- **Mark's focus is the danger to believer's faith that will arise in the age that follows the resurrection of Jesus.**

As noted the four sections of "**WHEN**" it would occur and "**WHAT**" would be the sign, are sandwiched in between the "**take heed**" warnings of verse 5 and verse 33 and both are the same word in the Greek translated "*take heed*" (though some versions have verse 5 as

SEE). The word for “*take heed*” means to “*look out, beware*” where as the the final warnings of verse 35 and verse 37 rendered “*watch*” is a different Greek word that means “*wake up, don’t fall asleep*”. There the warning is that a calamity is coming. As such before Jesus answers their two questions with regards to “**WHEN**” the end of the world would occur and “**WHAT**” the sign would be; Jesus wants to make sure His church understands that *the end of the world will be bring two specific dangers to the church:*

1. *That there would be those who attempt to use these “signs” to deceive His church to follow false messiahs.*
2. *And the danger that being to focused upon the end and His soon return can cause the Church to fall asleep in apathy when the signs they see don’t end up ushering in His soon return.*

There are **four sections** to Jesus message in verse 5-37 about “**WHEN**” the end would occur and “**WHAT**” the sign would be.

1. Vs. 6-13 **False Signs:** *These are real events but are NOT indications of when the world will come to an end or that Jesus would return.* The context of this is in Jesus’ words of verse 5 and the warning to be on the “*look out*” against those who would use what He is about to say to deceive believers. In verse 6 Jesus says that the “*signs*” will be used “*by many*” to claim “*I am He*”; for the purpose of “*deceiving many*”. Further more in verse 7 Jesus says, “*for such things must happen, BUT THE END IS NOT YET.*” And in verse 8 He says, “*These are the BEGINNINGS of sorrows.*” That being said Jesus goes on in verse 6-13 to mention **four events** that these “**FALSE MESSIAHS**” will use to deceive many.
 - A. Vs. 6 *Many will come in my name:* Jesus says that the 1st non sign is *the proliferation of “would-be-messiahs”*. Ironically, the first non sign is false messiahs on the scene claiming that they are the messiah.
 - B. Vs. 7-8a *Wars and rumors wars...nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:* The 2nd non sign will be *the inability of nations and kingdoms to get along with each other.*
 - C. Vs. 8b *There will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles:* The 3rd non sign will be *environmental calamities that will befall the world.*
 - D. Vs. 9-13 *They will deliver you up to councils...synagogues...rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. Brother will betray brother to death, father his child, and children will rise up against parents:* The fourth

non sign is ***rising persecution of believers***. At Jesus words the church hadn't even officially began and ***He is warning of its prolonged persecution*** at the hand of differing groups from the ***secular communities***, to ***the religious*** and ***even the immediate family***.

2. Vs. 14-23 **True Sign**: Here in this section is the answer to the question asked by the disciples as to "**WHEN**" the end of the world would occur and "**WHAT**" the sign would be. Notice in verse 14 Jesus uses the word "**WHEN**" which was what they originally asked and answers that the "WHEN" is an event "*spoken of by Daniel the prophet*" known as the "*abomination of desolation*" which is further clarified by Jesus as "*standing where it ought not.*" This ***true sign has three elements*** to it:
 - A. Vs. 14b ***The abomination of desolation***: we will look at this more in detail when we get to this section but it speaks of the antichrist standing in the Jewish temple attempting to receive worship. Obviously that means that there has to be a temple of the temple mount of which currently there isn't one.
 - B. Vs. 14b-20 ***Worldwide tribulation***: There will be upon the above event an instantaneous and immediate peril to believers first in Jerusalem but then globally like nothing the world has ever experienced. It's so bad according to verse 20 that "*unless the Lord shortened those days, no flesh would be saved.*"
 - C. Vs. 21-23 ***Worldwide deception***: The difference between these false messiahs is that they seem to be a direct agent of satan as they will have "*signs and wonders to deceive, if possible even the elect.*"
3. Vs. 24-27 **Climax of history**: In these four verse Jesus describes that at the end of the tribulation two things will happen:
 - A. Vs. 24-25 ***The end of the world as we now know it***, that will extend into the heavens.
 - B. Vs. 26-27 ***The second coming of Jesus to the earth coming in great power and glory***. What is not mentioned here is the rapture of the church which will precede His 2nd coming that is dealt with in other passages.
4. Vs. 28-37 **Guarantees and warnings**: This final section is divided into two sections:
 - A. Vs. 28-31 In these verse ***Jesus uses a parable as an exhortation to stay watchful and finishes it off with the assurance that what He has just told them is more certain than the heaven and earth.***
 - B. Vs. 32-37 The last warning ***Jesus issues has to do with not getting caught up in predicting the actual time but again be living an expectant life.***

Now have finished our outline next week we shall start our detailed look at each of these four sections.