

Mark 13. 1-13

Back to the Future

Part One: What to expect when you're expecting

Introduction

- We're going to break chapter 13 up into two parts over the next two weeks:
 - Part One, verses 1-13: What to expect when you're expecting.
 - Part Two, verses 14-37: Onward into the time between the trees.

Introduction to Mark 13

- This is the longest speech from Jesus in Mark.
- Jesus is going to spend a bunch of time describing what the future is going to look like for his disciples.
 - The future Jesus is referring to is what some have dubbed "the time between the trees". This is both the immediate future and later future (the cross and Revelation 22). Also called the last days or end times.
 - *See attached chart.
 - Some of this time has elapsed, and some is still yet to come.

Mark 13. 1-13 – What to expect when you're expecting

1 As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, "Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls."

2 Jesus replied, "Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!"

- Jesus was teaching in the Temple and is now leaving for the last time (run-ins with Temple leadership, teaching, and lesson from the widow).
- The disciple's marvel at the greatness of the Temple, and so it was. But what was its true nature? Jesus cares about nature, character, not appearances.
- The Temple was corrupt and would be replaced by Jesus and his follower's.
- Jesus predicts the Temple's coming destruction by the Roman's in 70AD (about 40 years later).



New Testament / Now

The Cross

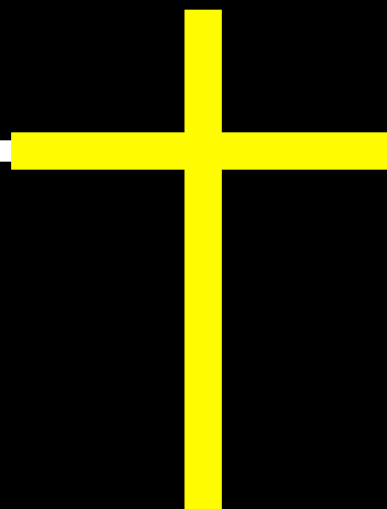
(Tree)

and Resurrection

**Jesus returns/
New Creation**

Tree of Life

Creation



The Fall

(We live here)



Old Testament

THE GOSPEL OF
MARK

- This is where a historical reality is reflected in theological truth. Jesus' prediction was right, the Temple was destroyed. He was also speaking of the Temple as the center for Jewish worship.
- The future resting place for God's Spirit wouldn't be housed in stone after the cross and resurrection, but in flesh, people, his followers.
- If we look back into Mark 12 when Jesus tells the story of the Evil Tenant Farmers we'll see another prediction of this.
- The Temple's destruction wasn't simply in the literal sense. The authority and presence of God would be housed in humans. The Temple would be replaced by temples.

3 Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across the valley from the Temple. Peter, James, John, and Andrew came to him privately and asked him, 4 "Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will show us that these things are about to be fulfilled?"

- Jesus has left the city and is looking at it from a distance. At this point the inner circle, the two sets of brothers, pluck up the courage to ask Jesus about what they think is about to go down. Remember, they probably still think Jesus is about to lead a military operation. They're asking about when things are going to kick off.
- Jesus' following words are not for the general public, nor for those who oppose him, but for his close followers. These words are meant to prepare them as his devoted disciples. That is his intent: preparation, warning and encouragement.
- *Mark* records these words as forewarning and comfort for the Christians he writes for twenty-thirty years later, likely experiencing much of what Jesus predicted.
- So, as we read into chapter 13 it's important to keep in mind that Mark hasn't shared these words in an aim to lay out a clear timeline of the end of days. When we approach this story that way, we'll interpret it incorrectly.

5 Jesus replied, "Don't let anyone mislead you, 6 for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.' They will deceive many. 7 And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. 8 Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in many parts of the world, as well as famines. But this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

- It's clear from his words that it seems a lot is about to happen.
- Other leaders will come along after Jesus. There were self-proclaimed Messiah's, liberators from amongst the Jewish nation came before Jesus and after.
 - Jesus tells his disciples to remember him and the kind of revolution he would lead, one quite different from the all the others.
- Jesus references general calamity in the world, a lot of turmoil. Much of what he was describing already occurred in the lifetime of the disciples (famine described in Acts 11) but hardship still continues today.
- This kind of language was familiar to Jewish people. It was language typically used for God's judgment on Israel and other nations in the Old Testament.
 - Jesus uses the image of labor in describing what the world will go through before the end, before an ultimate judgment. He calls this the "birth pains".
 - This is good news because it implies an end to the labor. Previously this language was associated with God's judgment – but these birth pains also imply a re-birth!
 - The labor leads to a delivery! God is both judge and deliverer. The fulfillment of this delivery will happen once Jesus returns.
 - Remember the previous chart – the "already but not yet" of Kingdom deliverance.

9 *“When these things begin to happen, watch out! You will be handed over to the local councils and beaten in the synagogues. You will stand trial before governors and kings because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me.* **10** *For the Good News must first be preached to all nations. 11 But when you are arrested and stand trial, don’t worry in advance about what to say. Just say what God tells you at that time, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.*

- Jesus also predicts much of what we see in the book of Acts. These very disciples will be arrested, persecuted, put on trial and threatened.
- Jesus says that persecution and challenge isn’t a curse, however, but an *opportunity* to share the Gospel, to talk about him.
 - An interesting thought! When we experience hardship and challenge do we view it as God’s displeasure with us, or something to avoid – or – are these opportunities to allow God’s grace and mission to flow through our lives? For God’s story to be displayed through ours?
- As we’ve seen already in Mark, the Gospel is intended to go out to all people. God has come to bring life and liberation, deliverance not only to the Jewish nation, but everyone!
 - This Gospel is going to oust corrupt and wayward systems and thinking, harmful thinking that exploits people like the widow we saw in the previous passage.
 - It’s going to and has to spread because God loves the world so much.
 - And so these disciples are going to be sent out! Places other’s haven’t gone or won’t go.
- These men, entrusted with the gospel, will be aided by God’s Spirit when they are put to the test.
 - Acts 4.13 – they could tell Peter and John had been with Jesus. The Spirit that was in Jesus was in them also – God’s Spirit!
 - These are simple men welcomed into a bigger story.
 - Isn’t that an encouraging thought – that this bumbling, stumbling,

spiritually simple-minded band of misfits have been released into the wild with God's good news for all people. And he's going to give them everything we need for the mission.

12 *"A brother will betray his brother to death, a father will betray his own child, and children will rebel against their parents and cause them to be killed. 13 And everyone will hate you because you are my followers. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*

- Jesus goes on to describe that things are going to get chaotic. The Gospel will be good news, but it will create a *great upheaval* in the world.
- This is an important note – *the Gospel is disruptive*.
 - When the kingdom is en-route and the King is about to return, all the other little kings will fight for their place on the throne. For the disciples, this was literal. Rulers and authorities would push back.
 - When the Gospel truly infiltrates and begins to transform a community it will have social, economic and political ramifications (see Acts 16.16-40, Paul and Silas in Philippi).
 - The gospel isn't an ethereal ideal or experience. God cares about people and people live in the real world and the gospel transforms the real world. Sometimes the real world doesn't want to change.
- And so we find one of Jesus' most encouraging statements in the Gospels and a wonderful motivation for becoming a Christian, *"Everyone will hate you because of you are my followers"*. How's that for trying to start a movement?
 - Let's return to the previous story of the widow and her offering.
 - Following Jesus will cost us something. Jesus gives everything and looks to his disciples and says, *"follow my lead"*.
 - What does being a Christian cost? The love of money, sometimes the love of popular opinion. It costs everything to gain everything.
 - Later Jesus will be crucified and as he is being nailed to the cross he

will say, *“Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they’re doing.”*

Sometimes the most painful thing in the world is to be misunderstood and be abused, slandered, hated even, because of that misunderstanding.

- The encouragement is, though, that as we trustingly put our whole lives in the offering (like the widow), we know we won’t be forgotten.
- Jesus says, hold on – though these “birth pains” signal the disruption of the rightful King and Kingdom arriving, stay faithful.
- He says to trust his Kingship. Trust his way of humility, service and love, and we’ll come out the other side into a New World.

Discussion Points and Questions

We are God’s temple. We house God’s Spirit.

- How does that reality inform how you see yourself and how you live?

God’s Spirit is different than we may think (humble, selfless, loving). Not like other Messiah’s or kings.

- What systems and patterns do you follow? Is it the way of Jesus, or a subpar knock-off?

God’s Spirit is in us for a reason – to deliver the good news about deliverance.

- What prisoners surrounded you and how can you point them to freedom?

God’s Spirit will give us what we need for where we’re sent.

- How can you trust God and step into moments of courage to point to truth and freedom?

Get ready for the adventure. Hold onto the hope.

Coming up May 17

Mark 13. 14-37

Back to the Future

Part Two: Onward into the time between the trees