

## Mark 13:1-13

### “The Results Of Rejecting The Prince of Peace”

We come this morning (as well as next week and maybe the week after) to what I'd consider to be probably the most difficult passage to deal with in the entire gospel of Mark. Because it deals with bible prophecy; and anytime you're dealing with prophecy you have to do so with a definite or purposed measure of humility because as much as bible teachers study and like to be prepared the fact is we just don't know everything and nothing seems to draw that out like the study of biblical prophecy.

and The nature of prophecy itself can sometimes be difficult simply because it can have multiple fulfillments down through the course of history even when it's pointing to something that's yet to culminate futuristically. Now that's not true categorically with prophecy but in many cases it is. and Such is the case with this particular passage, there have been things that have taken place *historically* which have pinpoint *application* from this passage, however the vast majority of its *interpretation specifically* is yet to take place.

Now as you study this passage there are a couple things that you want to bear in mind that will help you keep things clear as opposed to becoming confused. 1<sup>st</sup> of all I think it's important to realize the “Jewish atmosphere” found in this passage. This teaching of Jesus was the result of 4 Jewish men wanting to know from their Jewish Rabbi the things that revolved around the future state of their Jewish Temple. If you take what's stated here and interpret it with in the context of the church; your eschatology, or study and understanding of the end times will become confused because you will concede then that the church must go through the time of Jacob's trouble, or the Great Tribulation period of time at the end of the age just before Christ comes back. That time that the bible records that the wrath of God will be being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world; yet over and over again we see it pictured in the OT and stated plainly in the NT that as the bride of Christ we (the church) will be kept from that time.

All the way back in the book of Genesis; people have tried to point to Noah as proof that the church will go through the Great Tribulation. and That even as God preserved Noah He'll preserve the church. Not true, the flood comes in Gen Ch 7, Noah's preparation for the flood is found in Ch 6, the picture of the church is found in Ch 5 in the person of Enoch. Now concerning *him* we read, “*And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*” Gen 5:24 That word “took” literally means that God “seized” him or “snatched” him away. Or to understand that another way, Enoch was *raptured*, God snatched him up. Then the flood came, so Noah isn't a picture of the church, he's a picture of the nation of those Jewish individuals whose eyes are opened to Christ after the rapture whom God will preserve through the Great Tribulation.

People point to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego as the church who'll pass through the fire of the Great Tribulation unscathed. Again, they aren't a picture of the church; Daniel becomes the picture of the church who is mysteriously missing from the record during the time of that intense tribulation. Those boys are a picture of believing Israel whom God will preserve through “the fire” of His wrath being poured out upon a Christ rejecting world.

We read in the NT concerning our place (that is the church) with regard to God's wrath, *"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,"* 1 Thess 5:9 Jesus said to the church in Philadelphia there in Rev 3:10, *"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."* Which is a reference to this Great tribulation period.

Now I don't really want to turn this into a study on the rapture of the church (noted both in 1 Cor 15:51-52 and in 1 Thess 4:16-17), I'm simply noting the fact that we hold the firm conviction through the plain teaching of the scriptures that the church doesn't go through the Great Tribulation but is spared *from* that 7 yr period of time via the rapture.

However those to whom Jesus is speaking of here *do* go through the Great Tribulation and are encouraged to stay true to Christ in the *midst* of the Great Tribulation. and The language that Jesus uses, and the references that He makes don't really speak to the church per-say but rather to Jewish believers in Jesus. He makes reference to being delivered up to councils, to being beaten in the synagogues, He calls attention (we'll seen next time) to the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (as prophesied by Daniel), of course the holy place referring to a specific location in the temple that's to be rebuilt. So He's speaking this to encourage Jewish believers who'll be going through the fire and enduring persecution on a level that the world has never known. and He says, "Look, I'm telling you this in advance so that you won't consider the fiery trial that's to try you a strange, or unexpected (taken off guard) kind of thing.

Now for sure there is definite *application* to us in this passage, which brings me to the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing we need to realize and that is this. Jesus didn't say these things to satiate our curiosity concerning bible prophecy but rather to warn us practically to watch and be ready lest we be deceived. No less than 5 times throughout this Ch Jesus issues the imperative (or the command really) to watch, or to take heed.

The idea being that we're to keep our eyes peeled and stay on our toes because there are some things that are coming down the pike that if we're not watching for them and alert concerning them the real danger of being deceived is there.

1 Final thought before we make our way into this passage. We're going to see that Jesus speaks confidently about the future, and everything that He's spoken that's happened so far has taken place both exactly and literally as He said. Here's my point, we should be encouraged by the fact that nothing takes Jesus by surprise, He knows exactly what's going on and what's going to go on be it globally (both presently and prophetically) and/or personally in your life and my life individually. He has a plan for you; a path that He has prepared for you and nothing will thwart that or somehow cause Him to deviate from that. Having begun the work in you He'll be faithful to finish it.

By the way that's another evidence of His deity, the fact that He's God, because the bible is clear that none but God and God *alone* knows the future. We read, *"Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done,"* Isa 46:9-10 So by the sheer fact that Jesus declares speaks of things not yet done, and every word

He's ever spoken has transpired with pinpoint accuracy, that should tell you something about who He is personally, He's God.

Vs1

Now if you want a little bit bigger picture or fuller understanding of what's happening here you would do well to read both then end of Matt 23 through Ch 25, and Luke Ch 21. Because when we read Mark 13:1 it seems kind of strange that one of His disciples (Peter would be my guess) makes this seemingly random statement concerning the incredible architecture found both in the temple and the temple complex.

But toward the end of Matt 23 we read where Jesus had been lamenting over Jerusalem saying *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate;"* Matt 23:37-38

and He was referencing to the fact that He was leaving and was done extending Himself to them until the time of His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming. That nothing was left for them except judgment having rejected Him. and with that we read that He *went out of the temple*. Some of the saddest words ever recorded in the gospel of Mark. The presence of God literally left the temple, the Shekinah incarnate was taken from the temple and they didn't even know it. Things continued on business as usual.

When I read that I was reminded of Samson. A man who led a life empowered by the Spirit of God, who brought God glory *through* the Spirit of God, yet he came to a place where he was leading a life that was so carnal, so callused and *un-godly* that we read of him, *"...he did not know that the Lord had departed from him."* Judg 16:20 and As you know the result of that we see that sin binds you, blinds you and grinds you. But sad is the day when you can't distinguish between really being right *with* the Lord or walking in sin *before* the Lord because you're so callused, so carnal that you don't even know or realize the things in your life that are grieving the Spirit of God.

Jesus was lamenting over them, then He departed from them, and I don't know but it seems that Peter or one of them seeing Him upset probably tried to take His mind off of things. Sought to draw attention to how incredible the construction of the temple and its grounds truly was.

and It's true, from an architectural perspective the Temple itself was one of the magnificent structures of the ancient world. The temple and the complex surrounding it comprised approximately 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the total territory of the cities ancient boundaries. The temple mount covers an area of approximately 35 acres. Now the temple itself was originally built by Zerubbabel and Ezra (obviously Solomon's temple had been destroyed), but it was expanded and improved upon by Herod the Great. Not because he was religious but because he was seeking to win the favor of the Jews. and Construction began about 20 B.C. and didn't end till about 64 A.D. just about 7yrs before it was completely destroyed. But by the time Jesus was there that day construction had been going on for nearly 60 yrs, so it was a marvelous site to behold. The Jewish historian Josephus records that the outside was covered with gold plates that were so brilliant that when the sun shone on them you couldn't look directly at them, they were blinding. and Anywhere there wasn't gold the marble was so incredibly white that from a distance it looked like snow was there upon the temple. and The stones that were quarried were

so huge that engineers today still kind of scratch their heads because modern equipment couldn't manage them. 40-45' long, 8' high and 9' thick. You can still see some of the stones used to build the retaining wall (the wailing wall is really a retaining wall) and there are stones with similar and in some cases larger dimensions that are estimated to weigh over 140 tons. and They've been cut and quarried out of limestone with such precision that there was no use of mortar and you can't even fit a playing card in the cracks between them. Now if that kind of care and precision tooling was used in the constructing of the retaining wall, what kind of care do you think went into the temple itself? It was truly magnificent. But notice Jesus' response

**Vs2**

Whatever the response was that this particular disciple was hoping for was most certainly crushed and they were all no doubt staggered and legitimately stunned at what they heard Jesus say! He said, "Do you see these buildings of modern marvel, architectural and engineering genius, these buildings that've been almost 60 yrs in the construction phase and are still in the works? Not one of these enormous stones are going to be left on another that won't be thrown down." In other words this thing is going to come to total ruin.

and Jesus uses a double negative to communicate what He's saying which is to say that He's speaking absolutely and emphatically. and You know I just can't help but glean the application here that we do well not to set our sights on the things of this world. It doesn't matter how grand or glorious it may seem, how magnificent or breath taking it may be it's all coming to nothing. Paul said, *"...we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* 2 Cor 4:18 and It just seems to me that there's one more exhortation somewhere in here to focus not upon the temporal, but on the eternal. In Col 3:2 we read, *"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."* Jesus created the heavens and the earth with all the complexity and variety contained therein. Is He supposed to be impressed with this feat of man? The things of this earth are temporary at best, we're to be eternally minded as believers. and It's tough because we're of the earth, therefore it's difficult to get our hearts and minds stayed on things not on the earth. Yet God calls us to set our hearts on Him, on things above, not on the things of this world. We're to be an eternally minded people.

Jesus utters this incredible prophecy, that these stones of such incredible magnitude, immovable fortitude would be completely dismantled and destroyed. and Less than 40 yrs later, less than 7 yrs after it's completion that's exactly what happened. Long story short being done with dealing with some Jewish uprisings the heavy hand of Rome fell once and for all upon Jerusalem crushing the Jews. and Originally the order was given to keep the temple in tact but one of the soldiers started a fire in the temple that burned with such ferocity that the gold melted running into the various cracks and crevasses of the temple. and Ultimately the roman soldiers dismantled and destroyed the temple stone by stone in an effort to retrieve all the gold. Here's my point Jesus' words were fulfilled literally/exactly. and with that the tone is set for the remainder of what He says. If this prophecy was literally fulfilled, then we can justifiably expect everything else He says here to be literally fulfilled.

**Vs3-4**

You see what Jesus said them disturbed them, it wasn't something that they were ready to just let go. Because they were probably anticipating Jesus to reign from that temple, but now He

says it's going to be completely demolished. and In their minds the destruction of the temple must signal the end. As a matter of fact we read in Matt's gospel that that's exactly what they ask. They said, "*Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?*" **Matt 24:3** In other words, "What are the signs that the end of the world is upon us?" Because in their minds the destruction of the temple was tantamount to the end of the world.

Now, here in Mark's gospel we don't really get the answer to the question "when?" In Luke we read where Jesus gives them a bit of a clue because He tells them that they'll see Jerusalem surrounded by armies and when that happens its desolation and destruction is near. But here the focus isn't on the question "when" but rather the question "what?" The signs that will indicate the end has come. and In our text today Jesus doesn't focus so much on what the sign *is* but rather what the sign *is not*, and that there are certain things that will take place that we should get all alarmist and up in an "end of the world" frenzy about, notice.

But His response to their questions has served to give us what's become known as the "Olivet Discourse" and the reason it's called the Olivet Discourse is because Jesus shares these things from the Mt of olives across the valley from the Temple Mt.

### **Vs 5-6**

Vs 6 should be underlined in your bible. It's in the imperative mood meaning this is a simple straightforward command. "See to it that no one deceives you."

The word "deceives" could be translated "misleads" or "seduces" it speaks of causing you to go astray. and If you and I are going to recognize a lie what does that mean? We've got to know the truth; you don't learn to spot counterfeit bills by trying to study every illegitimate bill out there. You just study the genuine article, and once you know every intimate detail of the genuine article you'll spot a counterfeit. Be it by its feel, the fibers woven into it, the details of the markings on it, whatever.

and If you and I are to be in a place whereby we're ensured that we won't be deceived by a lie we're going to have study and know intimately the truth. We've got to know the scriptures (in their proper context). If you don't know Christ, or what the bible says *about* Christ you'll be left to your own inclinations, and when someone, or some teaching fits the bill that you figure would be representative *of* Christ, then so be it. and That's how so many are deceived be it by various people, or various movements and teachings. Because they won't study for themselves, they won't *take heed that no one deceives them*. They buy into the lie that makes them feel good about themselves or the world in general, and having refused to seek the truth people buy in to the most ludicrous lies. But what choice do you have, if you won't believe the truth there's nothing left *but* lies.

and The problem with false teachers is that they never advertise themselves as liars or deceivers. They present themselves as honest and completely trustworthy. They never say, "Come to me and I'll fill you full of lies and twist scripture for you to your own destruction." and Often times much of what they have to say is true, people it seems anticipate false teachers to be generally wrong about everything. But they're not, if they were no one would follow them, it's not the 97% of truth that you've got to worry about that they're feeding you, it's the 3% of poison they're slipping into the meal that's going to kill you. These guys like Joseph Smith come along claiming new revelation, or another gospel, they'll use terms like Jesus and

Son of God, but they don't mean what the bible means when they say it. They're subtle but they're deceivers. and They deceive in the name of Christ, and the responsibility lies upon you to ensure that you're not deceived, study and know what the word of God says.

### Vs7-8

Jesus says that you're only deceiving yourself if you have an anticipation or any sort of expectation that things will get better as time goes by. To the contrary they'll get worse and worse. All we might be saying is "give peace a chance" but it's impossible because mankind in general has rejected the *Prince of Peace*. Jesus was taken and nailed to a cross, despised and rejected by man, so how can there be peace when you've murdered the Prince of Peace? It'll be chaos, catastrophes and cataclysmic upheavals. Wars and rumors of wars, nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes, famines, turmoil and trouble. People are always seeking to say that they want things to be idealistic, but they want to be the one to dictate what that means. and When 2 or more opinions collide it's often times determined by might who gets to be right. Which makes for what? War, in the nearly 3,500 yrs of recorded human history there have been a combined total of 268 that haven't seen war.

and It's interesting that when we're in the midst of turbulent times on a national level, or global level (WWI, WWII, or natural catastrophes on a grand scale) that people always enter panic mode, "it's the end of the world!" Jesus said that we're not to be *troubled* by these things. Don't let those things scare you in that regard, those things have to happen. Why? Because they're the natural consequence of life apart from Christ ruling and reigning.

He says that these things don't signal the end, merely *the beginnings of sorrows*. The word literally speaks of birth pangs. Now birth pangs imply what? That the birth of something new is on the way, and that until that which is new arrives both the frequency and the intensity of the pangs will continue to escalate. So we can anticipate these things that Jesus has just mentioned to happen on an ever increasing scale with greater and greater intensity (subsiding occasionally) until He returns.

### Vs9-11

Few things quickly... 1<sup>st</sup> of all the exhortation once again to "watch out" to be on guard. Why? Because persecution is coming, be it in the synagogues (where they should've found refuge) or on a secular level, in both political and religious environments. But again it's not really the sign of the end, it's simply something they should expect. Why? Because they're in the world but not of the world. Jesus said that if you were of the world the world would love you but because He's called you out of the world, the world hates you. We read in **John 15:20**, "*Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*" But He let's them know that it won't be with out purpose, it'll serve as an opportunity for them to testify of Him. Both before rulers and kings, and you can see it happening in the book of Acts just this way.

and So historically it's *been* fulfilled, prophetically it'll *be* fulfilled. Also He says that the gospel must be preached to all the nations. Now some churches have taken this as their personal mandate to get the gospel out to get Jesus to come back. and Though we should all have a zeal to get the gospel to every tribe, tongue and nation, and Jesus commissioned us to make disciples of all nations. Don't think that we're holding Jesus back, according to the apostle Paul this has already been taken care of. He told the Colossians, "...*because of the hope which is laid up for*

*you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit,” Col 1:5-6* and It’s interesting that he wrote that not much more than 30 yrs after what we’re reading here. What an incredible testimony for the early church that didn’t have radio, television, the internet or jet planes. Can you imagine what a guy like Paul the apostle would accomplish today with all the mediums of getting the gospel out that we have?

and As far as Vs 11 goes I just can’t pass over this Vs with out stating what should be the obvious. Because I have known believers who will use this Vs as an excuse for lazy study habits (if they study at all) and they’ll say something to the effect of, “Hey, the bible says that the Spirit will give me what I need so I just rely on that.” But the bible is very clear that we’re to be *diligent* to present ourselves approved unto God, workman that need not be *ashamed* rightly dividing the word of truth. Which is to say if we’re not studying the word *we should be* ashamed. The parameters that surround this promise deal with persecution and being placed on trial or before a council to give a testimony of what you’re doing and why. and Jesus says that when you’re between a rock and a hard place, and persecution has delivered you up to be judged before whatever powers may be that decide your fate, the Holy Spirit is going to give you the words to say in that hour, at the appropriate time.

What He’s *not saying* is that you don’t need to study the word, or be prepared to stand and teach or preach the word in the collective assembly. Believe me the Spirit knows what we need well before I stand here. and We believe that though the Spirit definitely leads at various times in ways that may vary slightly from my notes or whatever, He gives me what we need in that personal, private time, and the overflow of that is what is shared here with you. We’re dining on the meal that’s been prepared for us so that by the time we arrive here, it’s fresh out of the oven (so to speak).

### **Vs12-13**

Jesus said, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'” Matt 10:34-36* If you were a Jew in Jesus’ day and you abandoned Judaism for Christianity, you’d be considered a blasphemer and dead to your family. If you’re in a strict Muslim family and you convert to Christ you could literally be killed for your decision. You guys just because physical persecution is something that seems sort of distant to us in America don’t think that it’s a thing of the past. It’s believed that 10’s of thousands of believers are being held and tortured in prison camps in north Korea, in Saudi Arabia and other Islamic nations conversion to any other “religion” is punishable by death. It’s estimated that approximately 55,000 Christians are killed each yr due to reasons relating to their faith. Since the time of Christ it’s estimated that somewhere to the tune of 70 million Christians have been martyred for their faith 45.5 million in the last century alone. 65% of the total Christians killed throughout world history happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we obviously can’t total the 21<sup>st</sup>. People are persecuted everyday just because they love Jesus.

Christ draws a clear line in the dirt and will force your position to one side or the other, there is no neutral ground you are for Him, or against Him. and He calls His own to endure, to bear up (if necessary) under persecution. He may or may not deliver you physically, either way

we're to remain faithful to Him to the very end. and If Christ be in you, you will; if your confession of Him is empty you'll never make it.

I realize that we're not ending on a real high note today, I would encourage you to maintain the eternal perspective, trouble will visit you in this life, set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth...

#### Prayer Points:

Lord we thank You for the transparency of Your Word, that You don't speak to us in ambiguous or difficult to understand language. But that You speak plainly about what we're to expect, what will signal the end, and what won't, things that should just be expected simply because our heart belongs to You. Lord we pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters, may they endure to the end to the glory of Your name. and Father may we be true to You, and be diligent to study Your word, to know the truth and so recognize the lie. and Help us to set our sights on things above, to maintain an eternal perspective and not be distracted by the things of this world.

As you can see the results of a Christ rejecting world are chaotic and cataclysmic, it's a world in upheaval and disorder. But in the midst of it all Christ (the Prince of peace) can give you peace. He can forgive you of your sin and give you the free gift of everlasting life. Mankind murdered Jesus, but God raised Him from the dead, He was delivered up for our transgression and raised for our justification. If you want to stand justified before God, then let me encourage you, give your life to Christ.