

Mark 13:14-23

“Make Sure You Miss This”

As we enter back in to the Olivet Discourse (this teaching that Jesus gave upon the Mt of Olives) you recall what inspired it was a statement Jesus made followed up by a question from His disciples. As they were leaving the temple after a long day one of His disciples drew attention to the incredible architecture & engineering master piece that the temple represented. & Jesus said, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now believe me when I tell you that a statement like that couldn’t just go uninvestigated or be left w/out a response. Because it was a statement that was so incredible, so seemingly impossible that the only thing that would warrant that kind of action (in the disciple’s minds) was the end of the age, when it all comes down & the earth is on the edge of destruction.

So as they left the temple, passed through the Kidron valley and began to head up the Mt of Olives they just couldn’t keep silent anymore. A few of the boys pulled Jesus aside & said, “When is all this going down, what’s going to be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled, & when the end of the world has come?” (Now remember Matt 24 & Luke 21 are parallel passages, so we have additional clues there that help us piece together a bit of the bigger picture). But w/that Jesus began to teach them & the result is what we call the Olivet Discourse, this prophetic passage of scripture that deals w/what’s coming down the pike just prior to Christ’s return.

& Let’s remember as we prepare to pick it back up that the overall emphasis found in passage is toward Israel. There’s definite *application* for you & me, but its *interpretation* is specifically for believing Israel in the last days during what the bible refers to as the “Great Tribulation” or “The Time Of Jacob’s Trouble.” That final 7 yr period of time just prior to the return of Jesus to establish His kingdom on the earth whereby He will rule & reign for 1,000 yrs, (what we refer to as the Millennial reign of Christ).

A time of which the bible tells us, *“He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.”* Isa 2:4 & Again Isaiah says, *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.”* Isa 11:6-9

But as you’ve heard the darkest hour comes just before dawn even so prior to peace ruling over the earth incredible upheavals & cataclysmic events will come to pass. Last week we learned what the signs of the end of the earth *will not* be. They won’t be wars, rumors of wars, nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom, earthquakes & famines, various natural disasters in various places. Those things are a byproduct of rejecting J.C. (the Prince of Peace),

you can't have peace once you've rejected the *Prince of Peace*. Jesus was despised & rejected by man. However Jesus did warn us to anticipate such things happening more frequently & w/a greater intensity as the end approaches, like birth pangs signaling the end of one thing & the beginning of another. So we know what the sign *is not* (though those things are included in a general sense) what then *will* signal to Israel that the end is near? Notice Vs 14

Vs14

Jesus says, "When you see *this*, when you see the abomination that causes desolation, let every shadow of doubt be removed, you're there." & At that point (as we'll see momentarily) you are literally 3 ½ yrs (like a clock ticking down) from the physical return of Jesus to the earth. Now believe me (church) when I tell you that *you don't want to see this sign*, why? Because it'll mean that you have missed the rapture & that you are about to enter in to the throws of persecution unparalleled in human history mingled w/the wrath of God bringing devastation & destruction upon the earth!

But we should note that Jesus was asked a straight question, & He gave a straight answer. There's nothing ambiguous about this sign, He tells us plainly what it is. & Then it's underscored w/the words, "let the reader understand." Which means that the exhortation is there for us to do our due diligence in coming into a balanced understanding of the word of God; now if you have a "red letter" addition bible you see that those words are in black. What that means is that the translator thought that Mark added that later, but Jesus didn't say it then (the words of Jesus are in red). I'm not so certain that's true, it's quite possible that Jesus could've issued the exhortation personally. Because the sign He's referring to is something that had been written down & prophesied by Daniel hundreds of yrs earlier. So He's not really giving them fresh insight here, something never before stated to them by God, He's redirecting them back to the written word & exhorting them to get a grip on it.

So w/that we'd do well to know what it was that Daniel said, what is this "abomination of desolation" that he's talking about? Listen, leave the gospel of Mark & make your way back to the book of Daniel Ch 9.

& What you find in Dan Ch 9 is Daniel interceding & praying for his people, & before he's finished praying the angel Gabriel is sent to him to give understanding to him regarding God's plan for the nation of Israel. & God informs him (via Gabriel) that God's plan for Israel (at least from that point forward) would revolve (basically) around a series of 7's. Seventy, seven yr periods of time, & he let's Daniel know what would be accomplished during that time & when the clock would begin ticking concerning that time. So if you would, place your attention on Vs 24 where we read from there...

Vs24-26

So when did the clock begin to tick? When the command went forth to restore & rebuild Jerusalem; now we looked at that a few weeks ago in Mark Ch 11, you can pick up a copy of that study if you're interested. The bottom line figure is that it takes us from Mar 14th 445 B.C. when that command went forth up to April 6th 32 A.D. when Messiah the Prince (Jesus) rode into Jerusalem revealing Himself as the Messiah on that day known as the Triumphal entry. But as we read here He was cut off, but not for Himself. Jesus was crucified, cut off, but not for Himself, not for some crime He'd committed or had been found guilty of. He was crucified for you & for me, for the sin of the world, He was accomplishing what we read back in Vs 24. The

cross wasn't a horrible accident it was a carefully orchestrated event planned from before the foundations of the world (that's what the bible teaches).

& Notice that the people of the *prince who is to come* shall destroy both the city and the sanctuary. "Wait a minute, wait a minute, what is this *prince who is to come* business? Who is that?" The bible refers to this guy in a few different ways; he's known as the son of perdition, the man of sin, the beast, & probably most commonly the anti-Christ. & Notice in Vs 26 that we read that it would his people who would destroy the city & the sanctuary.

Now that happened in 70 A.D. through what army? The *Roman* army, that's one reason (out of a few found in the scriptures) that we believe the Anti-Christ will arise out of Rome, or have some sort of connection w/& affiliation *to* Rome. Daniel 11:37 alludes to the fact that he'll be Jewish man (& not to major on this point) but he *may* be of homosexual orientation. We read there that he will not regard the God of his fathers *nor* the desire of women.

Vs27

So this man will make a covenant w/Israel (which will more than likely include the rebuilding of their temple, something for which all the plans & instrument are in place as we speak) but in the middle of the week, (or 3 ½ yrs into the covenant) he will violate the contract, break the covenant & bring an end to their daily sacrifices. Vs 31 of Ch 11 gives us additional details, turn there (read).

So he will bring an end to the daily sacrifices & *defile the sanctuary* & place there the abomination of desolation. Now if you know much about Hebrew vernacular you know that when they're speaking of an abomination as a general rule it's a reference to what? To idolatry, esteeming something or someone in the place of God. & We're reading here (Jesus underscoring it) that what this man will do will be so offensive, so blasphemous that the Jews will abandon worship in the temple altogether & leave it desolate.

& The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul gives us further insight concerning that in 2 Thess Ch 2 where he's writing to them concerning the 2nd coming of Christ & he says to them, "*Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*" 2 Thess 2:3-4 Paul says 2 basic things have to happen before Christ returns to establish His earthly kingdom.

#1 The falling away comes 1st. Now I don't like that translation, the word there translated "falling away" literally means "departure." & I believe that there's ample evidence (though we don't have time to consider it today) to support the fact that the "departure" he's talking about is that of the church to heaven in the rapture. Right there in the same context just a few Vs later he writes, "*For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*" 2 Thess 2:7 & Of course the restraining element is the person & work of the Holy Spirit in and through the church. & Once the church is removed the man of sin (or the antichrist) will be revealed.

Which brings us to #2 Before Christ returns the antichrist will arise, become a world leader & wreak devastation & destruction untold. These 2 things have to happen before the 2nd coming, now in Mark 13 Jesus is instructing the Jews, those who come to believe in Christ *after* the rapture, when the church is removed. & As you study the scriptures you realize (another

reason for pre-trib rapture position) that God doesn't work w/the church & the nation of Israel simultaneously. Now we're all one in Christ, no distinction or division; but as far as God's plan is concerned the bible demonstrates God working w/Israel. Making a covenant w/Israel that He *will not break*, Israel rejecting the Messiah, God setting Israel aside in what's considered to be the age of the Gentiles where He turns to & works in the Gentile nations until what Paul calls in the book of Romans "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." Then God turns back to Israel & completes His plan w/them in that final 7 yr period of time on planet earth prior to the return of Christ.

So we find Jesus point out this 2nd thing to the Jews so that when they're reading this, learning of this, they'll take comfort in the words of Christ.

He says when you see the abomination of desolation (spoken of by Daniel the prophet) standing where it ought not (Matt tells us that place is the holy place, the sanctuary of the temple); it's time to flee & w/urgency.

Now about 170 yrs prior to this a Syrian king by the name of Antiochus Epiphanies (because the Jews refused to worship him as the embodiment of Zeus) came in devastated & destroyed the Jews. Offering swine on the altar, forcing them to eat the meat raw, smearing pigs blood on the walls of the temple, setting a statue of Zeus up in the temple & forced the Jews to worship it, turned the temple into a brothel & just desecrated the temple & brutally destroy men, women, children & infants. & As bad as that was Jesus is saying that was merely a foreshadowing of what will be fulfilled when this takes place.

So what are they to do, when this happens how should they respond? Flee! & W/a sense of urgency, notice.

Vs15-18

Remember the exhortation last week to set our minds on things above & not on things of the earth? How that we're not to cling to tightly to the things of this world? Here Jesus says, "When this happens, don't take the time to pack your bags, to go back inside your home, to grab your jacket leaving work, just get out. Be it during a time of leisure or labor that you see this, just run for your life!"

When He speaks of being on the roof, that's pointing to leisure, their rooftops are flat, they're like decks for them. When He speaks of being in the field, that points to labor, being at work. Doesn't matter where you are or what you're doing flee for your life.

Back in Vs 7 Jesus said not to be troubled at those things, or worry about it being the end because of what you're seeing or hearing. But now we're read that Jesus says, "If you see *this*, you better run, because your very life depends on it."

"When the charismatic world leader who makes a covenant w/you comes into the temple 3 ½ yrs later & breaks the covenant, puts a stop to the sacrifices & demands to be worshiped as God (and all the world worships him accordingly Rev 13) don't go home, don't grab your jacket on the way out the door just flee!" & Of course like a calendar that means there's only 3 ½ yrs of human history left before Jesus returns to establish His kingdom on the earth.

& He says, "Woe to those who are pregnant or nursing during those days, pray that your flight not take place in the winter." & In Matt's gospel He says, "Pray that this not take place on the Sabbath." Why? Because even today all activity comes to a virtual stand still in Israel on the

Sabbath. It'll be a slaughter of unspeakable magnitude, and people who are pregnant or nursing, or if it takes place during winter it'll only make matters more difficult for them.

Vs19

Stop right there & think about that, do you realize the enormity of that statement. "Tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be!" Wow, there's been significant tribulation seen throughout the course of history concerning mankind. Jesus says here that all of it pales at best compared to what will be unleashed in that day at that time. In the 1,300's when the bubonic plague swept across Europe over a period of 8 yrs killing 25 million people. Jesus says that won't touch this. It's been estimated that throughout the 20th century somewhere between 167-175 million lives were deliberately extinguished due to politically motivated carnage (wars, strategic famines etc). Jesus says what's coming is worse.

Think of the tribulation the Jews have seen just themselves over the course of human history. Consider 3 of the most ancient civilizations known to man as far as historical record is concerned. India, China & of course Israel. Today there is officially over 1.3 billion Chinese people on the planet. Indians (that is of the nationality of India) around 1.2 billion, total number of Jews on the planet; less than 20 million, there are less than 6 million Jews in Israel today. Persecution & tribulation has visited the Jewish people like no other race in human history. Yet Jesus says what's coming during this time of great tribulation will be unparalleled in human history from the time of creation & there will never be a time like it again. You guys that's a serious statement. & That's why you don't want to be here...

Because not only will God be pouring out His wrath upon the Christ rejecting world, the antichrist will be unleashing persecution upon believers in a way the words fail to explain. You can get a preview of it in the book of Rev, the OT book of Joel touches on it as well as some others. The bottom line is that you want to catch the 1st train out, you want to know Christ, walk intimately w/Christ & be called up to Christ in the rapture of the church. Paul told the Thessalonians in 1st Thess Ch 1 Vs 10 that Jesus delivers us from the wrath to come. We read in Luke's gospel where Jesus said, *"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* Luke 21:36

By the way we see here that Jesus didn't ascribe to the theory of evolution, He was a Creationist. He says that God is the One who formed the creation, in the beginning *God* made the heavens & the earth. They didn't "bang" into being, God created the heavens & the earth & all the things contained therein. Now John tells us concerning Jesus that, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."* John 1:3 Now if Jesus tells us that God created everything, & John tells us that all things were made through Jesus & w/out Him nothing was made that was made, & Paul tells us in Col that all things were made *by* Him & *for* Him, what does that tell us about Jesus? He must be God.

Vs20

Jesus says that the time will be so severe that unless God intervened, if He just let things go rather than stick to the 3 ½ yrs that mankind would self-destruct, no one would be left alive. But because of His promises, His covenant, & for those who are true to Him throughout these dark & desperate times He'll spare the earth of complete & total annihilation. However when

you read the book of Rev it becomes real apparent that it's not too far short of that. When Christ returns mankind is on the brink of complete annihilation, the wars, natural disasters & supernatural judgments that are wreaking havoc on the earth.

Vs21-22

Or to understand that another way these guys will be convincing. Not because they're great charlatans but because the works that they'll be doing in order to try & establish themselves as the real deal will be legit. Supernatural feats, signs & wonders. Paul told Timothy, *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,"* 1 Tim 4:1-2 They'll willfully, knowingly deceive people & lead them astray, their conscience seared w/a hot iron, no feeling left in it.

But Jesus is here warning us, letting us know that signs & wonders alone are not enough to establish someone as a legitimate man of God. In that day people will be trying to draw true believers out of hiding, "Look here's the Christ!" & They'll see these signs & wonders that are for real & the temptation will be there to believe it. Paul said, *"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,"* 2 Thess 2:9

Yet Jesus says, "Don't believe it." Why? Because as we'll note next week the 2nd coming of Christ won't be a secret thing, you won't have to catch the highlights of it on the evening news!

"Well, if the legitimate miraculous isn't enough to verify someone as from God, what is? What's the measure of discernment?" Listen, it's the *word* of God. The bible is clear that even if someone comes to you w/signs & wonders, all sorts of miraculous feats & smooth words yet they encourage you in ways contrary to the word of God they were *never of* God. We're to rely on the ready witness of the word of God.

Vs 23

What are we to trust? What Jesus has *told us* beforehand, our measure of discernment is to be rooted in the word of God. Trust *in the Lord* w/all of your heart, & lean not on your own understanding.

Do yourself the greatest favor you could ever do, make your calling & election sure, establish the fact in your heart that you've *given* your heart to Jesus, make sure you miss this. Often times we hear, "Man, you don't want to miss this." Believe me when I tell you that you *want* to miss this. & There's only one way that can happen; I could be wrong but based upon the global scene it seems to me that we're on the eve of these things. Be that a year or 2 or 25 I don't know (perhaps we'll touch on the ambiguity of some of that next time). But I believe that this could very well be the generation that sees these things. & Christ is the only escape, it's not a scare tactic, simply the fact. Jesus is the One who delivers us from the wrath to come. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever would believe upon Him would *never perish* but have everlasting life. Because God didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world *through Him* might be saved...

Prayer Points:

Father we're so thankful for Your mercy *toward* us, Your *faithfulness to* us & that in Your heart there's not condemnation toward us, You've provided the means of salvation for us. & We thank You that You haven't appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation through Christ Jesus our Lord. & Now we pray that we might be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass that we might stand before the Son of Man to the praise (Lord) of Your name.

The only way we'll be found worthy is to be found in Christ, if you've not given your heart to Christ let me encourage you that you not delay. Today if you will hear His voice don't harden your heart, open your heart, believe on the Lord J.C. & you *will be* (not might be) you will be saved. Jesus bore the wrath of God on our behalf, He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.