

## **Life Group notes 17 Nov 2024: Run for the Hills**

### **Mark 13**

Preached by Jeremy <https://www.npbc.org.nz/sermons/run-for-the-hills/>

#### **Intro:**

The New Testament was written in Greek and often the Greek words and phrases could be loaded with extra meaning or symbolism that we don't pick up today because we don't live in the ancient Greek world. When the Greek is translated into English and the English words don't always capture exactly what the Greek words are saying. This means we need to take extra time and care when we are studying the Bible.

Today we are coming to a chapter in Mark which runs the risk of being miss-understood. Mark 13 is a chapter that addresses the loaded topic of End Times, and the topic is loaded because of how people today interpret Mark 13. People often have some very strong views and opinions based upon our English interpretations. These views range from people that think that the end times are some long-awaited, future, distant event, that we don't need to worry about yet, to those who think the end times are coming any day now because of all the different signs that are happening in the world.

If we really want to understand Mark 13 today; then we need to first sit with what it was saying to its original audience...

**Read: Mark 13:1-23**

**Q: What does verse 1 tell us about the temple?**

The temple was where the presence of God resided so that the Jewish people could worship God. It equalled the presence of God and they made it magnificent - because they wanted people to look at the temple and be moved to worship God in all his glory.

**Q: How do you think the disciples must have felt when Jesus said what he did in verse 2? Can you recall the fig tree in Mark 11:12? Do you remember what Jesus was teaching the disciples when he cursed the fig tree?**

**Read: Mark 13:4**

This sets the context for the following verses. Jesus in the next few verses is responding to the disciple's question about when the temple will be destroyed by the Romans and the signs that will lead up to the destruction. Most of Mark 13 is actually about the destruction of the temple which is going to be fulfilled roughly 40 years after Jesus says these words.

**Q: Scan over Mark 13 from verse 5 to 13. What are the signs that will occur before the destruction of the temple?**

**Q: Who is Jesus talking to when he uses the word “you” repeatedly?**

Answer – the followers of Jesus, his disciples that were listening to him. This isn't addressing us here and now; it was personally addressed to his audience.

In verses 14-23 Jesus tells them what they will take place when the temple is destroyed, about 40 yrs from then. (70 AD).

**Q: What sort of suffering will they endure when the Romans come?**

**Read: Daniel 11:31**

**Q: What do you think the “Abomination that causes desolation” is?**

The prophecy in Daniel (written 530 BC) was in reference to the future when **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** – the Greek King – desecrated the temple by erecting a pagan altar within it in 167 BC.

Jesus is saying that, just like that revolting thing was put in the temple that didn't belong in 167 BC; this is going to happen again at the hands of Rome. This time when it happens – flee, run for the hills, don't hang around. Jewish historian Josephus writes about how when the Roman siege took over the temple, people starved to death, people ate their own babies to stay alive, people fought each other for scraps of dirty food, and more Jewish people were killed by their fellow Jews than by the invading Romans.

More here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege\\_of\\_Jerusalem\\_\(70\\_CE\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(70_CE))

**Q: Why do you think Jesus tells his followers to flee? Surely, they should stand, hold their ground and protect the sacred temple? Remember that fig tree....**

Many Jewish people were going to stand at the foot of the temple and die because the temple had become their religion, their faith, and their God.

For followers of Christ in the new covenant, salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. The temple and its old ways are not our ways anymore. Followers of Christ are to flee – they are to leave the old ways behind and run to a new way of life in Christ Jesus.

**Q: What should the disciples be on guard against in verse 23?**

**Read: Mark 13:21-23**

**Verse 24 ushers in a new description of end times – Note in verse 24, “following *That* distress” What distress is being spoken of? The destruction of the temple in 70AD!**

Jesus is saying: It is going to feel like the world is coming to an end in 70AD; but this is not actually the end. **The return of Jesus is.**

**Read: Mark 13:24-27**

**Q: What will happen when Jesus returns? Are there any signs we need to be looking out for that indicates he is coming?**

Jesus says that the cosmos will make it clear that the end times are upon us. The sun will be darkened. The moon will not give light. Stars will fall.

We will clearly know that it is the end times! And the Son of Man will come in clouds with great power and glory, and he will gather his angels and elect from the ends of earth and heaven. The end times will come suddenly, without warning and it will be obvious.

Looking ahead in the text, we see some parables that help explain the chapter. Mark 13 can be broken into **four sections** that have an A B A B, pattern forming.

A – The destruction of the Temple (current)

B – The end times when the Son of Man comes with great power and glory (Future)

A – The parable of the fig tree (the destruction of the temple 70AD)

B – the parable of the man going away (the end times, the future)

**Read: Mark 13:28-30**

**Q: What generation is Jesus talking to? What are they going to see?**

Answer – Rome destroys the temple in 70AD

**Read: Mark 13:32-37**

**Q: Have you ever heard of anyone predicting the times when Jesus will return? Has that date passed already? What are the chances they know when this will happen? What does verse 32 say?**

According to Mark 13 – the signs (earthquakes, false prophets, wars, famine etc) are just part of living in a fallen world – the end times (When Christ returns) are going to come suddenly, without warning, and they will be obvious.

Rather than trying to work out information that only God knows (v32) maybe we should be putting that time and energy into living for the Kingdom of God right here – right now.

**Conclusion:**

Now, although these verses were written to a specific audience about an event that was going to take place within their lifetime; there are still things we can learn from this chapter for us today.

Where do we place our allegiance? Is our faith and hope in Jesus Christ or is our faith and hope in other things like the temple? We might not have the same issues with the temple that the Jewish people struggled with; but every generation creates their own false temple that becomes an idolatrous form of worship.

What are we likely to idolise and worship in the west? Are we patriots to our country? Do we expect our government to save and protect us? Or our wealth? What about idolising your career over the kingdom?

If you want to know what your idol is then just start reflecting on where you put all your time, energy, thoughts and resources. If there is something in our lives that has become an idol – then we need to flee and run for the hills. We need to strip our lives from anything that can get in the way of us following Jesus.

**Q: When we read verse 34, what do you think it means that we need to “Keep watch”?**

**What does it mean that we may be caught sleeping (v36)?**