

**RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark**

#28: Mark 13: The End is Near!

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*Intro: A Thief in the Night*

**I. Overview and introduction to the Olivet Discourse**

**A. Background**

- Understanding how OT prophecy functioned
- Understanding the message of OT prophets
- Parallels in the ministry of Jesus

**B. Outline of Mark 13:**

- vv.1-3: The revelation concerning the Temple's destruction
- vv.4-23: The reality of opposition in the current age
- vv.24-31: The return of the King
- vv.32-37: The right response

**C. The setup that helps explain the passage**

- The destruction of the Temple
- Two questions (v.4):
  - 1) "Tell us, when will these things be,
  - 2) ...and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"
- "These things" connects v.4 to v.23 and brackets out Jesus's first explanation

**Question:** Where does your mind go after reading this chapter? Does it lead to: questions about how to read the times? Questions about timing? Feelings of fear? Feelings of doubt or disbelief?

**II. The Reality of Opposition in the Current Age (vv.4-23)**

**A. Jesus speaks of the current age (the Interadvent period)**

- These are the "last days" in Scripture, the period between the first and second coming of Christ
- Hebrews 1:2: "but in *these last days* he has spoken to us by his Son..."
- Notice that Jesus's words have relevance *for the disciples*. The disciples experienced all of these things.
- Conclusion this is describing the opposition the church faces, then and now.

**B. Opposition**

- The church faces false teaching and false messiahs (vv. 6,21,22)

- Don't be led astray
- The church faces a broken, unsettled, hostile world (vv.7-8)
  - Don't be alarmed
- The church faces persecution (vv.9-13)
  - Don't be anxious. This is part of the spread of the Gospel (v.10)!

**Question:** What makes Jesus's discourse pastoral? How should this encourage the church? How should it challenge the church?

**C. The church must learn from the destruction of Jerusalem (vv.14-23)**

- What is this describing?
  - Foreign armies standing in the Temple
    - "The abomination of desolation" in Daniel 11:31
    - Luke 21:20 confirms this
  - Geographic references
- Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

**Question:** what should the church learn from the destruction of the Temple?

**III. The Return of the King: hope and confidence (vv.24-31)**

**A. Notice the "Second Coming" language (24-27)**

- Verses 24 and 25 sound like Revelation 6:12-14
- "Son of Man coming in clouds" (v.26) is also in Daniel 7:13 and Rev. 14:14
- The POINT: Jesus is describing His second coming. Therefore, it's the next thing on the horizon!
  - Remember how prophecy often works. Cf. – Luke 21:24

**B. The return of Christ is meant to inspire confident expectation (vv.28-31)**

- Question: How does the fig tree and Jesus's words do that?

**IV. The Right Response: stay awake (vv.32-37)**

- Avoid speculation (v.32)
- Respond to the Gospel: repent and believe! Jesus is perfect Israel and the true Temple.
- Work and long for the King's return

**Discussion Groups**

1. How does knowing that Jesus is the new Temple (John 2), help us understand this passage? Understand the end of times?
2. Why is speculating about end of times events unfruitful? How does it work against the church's mission?
3. Recall the first question: where does your mind go when you read this passage? How does Jesus's teaching speak to your initial reaction? How do you plan to "stay awake?"