

**July 6<sup>th</sup> 2008: Mark's Gospel: Mark 13:**  
**The Present and the Future: In God's Hands**

**I have never seen the Taj Mahal but I'm told it's beautiful**

Built out of love for a woman

**Yet from what I have read....the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of Christ**

Built out of love for God

Surpassed that in every way

JOSEPHUS wrote:

***"Now the outward face of the Temple in its front wanted nothing that was likely to surprise either men's mind or their eyes: for it was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and at the first rising of the sun, reflected back a very fiery splendour, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But this Temple appeared to strangers, when they were at a distance, like a mountain covered with snow, for as to those parts of it that were not gilt, they were exceedingly white.....Of its stones, some of them were forty-five cubits in length, five in height and six in breadth(20 metres long by over 2 metres high !)"***

A massive, beautiful structure that meant so much to every Jew.....

**And on this occasion** as Jesus left it for the very last time....one of His disciples said Mark 13:1 ***"Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"***

- **The response Jesus gave**.....absolutely blown them out of the water:  
***"Do you see all these great buildings? Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."***
- **For His disciples I would suggest**.....Most shocking thing ever heard Him say !!!

**On the occasions that** He had predicted His death  
 They had obviously been moved.....**but we don't** hear of them pursuing the subject

**But regarding this matter...**

His closest disciples.....Peter, James, John, Andrew

**Can hardly wait** till they have Him alone.....sitting on the Mount....opposite

Before they anxiously ask Him in v4

***"Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"***

**You see....for Jew** ....the destruction of the Temple would be such a catastrophic ....  
**That it** could mean only one thing.....**The end** of the age and the Day of the Lord

- **So their Question is really:** → **When** will the Temple be destroyed ????  
**And what then** will be the sign that this ....end of the age.....**Day of the Lord**  
.....**about to happen ??**

- **In the remainder of the chapter we have Jesus' answer**  
**An answer that shows.....**that the destruction of.....and the Day of the Lord  
**are two separate incidents.....**with an unknown period of time between them.

**It is this.....**the talking about two entirely different events...that has made Mark 13  
**Quite difficult to understand.....**

**It becomes much clearer.....**when we pinpoint the verses when Jesus talks...Temple  
**And the verses** when He talks.....About His triumphant return

- **So turn to your Bibles.....and look at 13:5-8.....**  
**Here we find Jesus** beginning to answer there question concerning the ..**Temple**

**The end He refers to in v7.....**is the end of the Temple  
Which in AD 70 Romans destroyed **That period the Temple represented**

- **THE TEMPLE'S END**  
**It would be preceded by** a terrible time for Jew and Christian  
**A time of wars and earthquakes**  
& from AD 66-70 constant wars between the Jews and the Romans

**A time also of potential deception.....**& once more  
there were many false Messiahs around in those four years of fighting.....

**And Jesus is concerned that His followers** be aware of this....lest they be deceived

- **Indeed we mustn't miss this strong concern Jesus shows for his followers**
- **He knows that things will be hard for them**
- **He knows that the enemy of souls will attempt to deceive them...to destroy**

**And He begins this whole discourse with the word WATCH (v 5)**  
**And then ends** it in v37 with the word WATCH

**In between we find again and again....Jesus saying:**  
**You must be** on your guard(9)....**So be** on your guard(23)....  
**Be on** guard, be alert(33)....**watch**(34).....**keep watch**(35).....**watch** (37)

- **In the section→9-13** Jesus speaks to the Christians living through that period **He warns** them that life as a Christian won't be easy **They will be arrested**.....put on trial.....betrayed.....hated.....some even killed **But also** during that period the Gospel would be preached.....to all known nations

- **Then we come to the most debated section**

To verse 14-23 which begins:

***"When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those in Judea flee to the mountains."***

**This phrase—“abomination** that causes desolation” comes directly from Daniel's .. **The Jews saw** that this had been fulfilled in **168 BC** when Antiochus Epiphanes --desecrated the Temple.....**Altar to Zeus.....sacrificed a swine**

- **But here Jesus is saying** that there is yet another fulfilment....still to come **That the present Temple**.....could see before them.....would also be desecrated **And when they see**....standing where it....(He)...does not belong **such would be the moment** when Christians would need to flee Jerusalem.

- **From the history of that shocking period we now know**

**That from the death of**.....the Zealots began to really push for Jewish freedom **In AD 66** they convinced Palestinian Jews to join a full scale rebellion against Romans

**They then took over the Temple as their stronghold**  
**They made it a fort and treated the Holy of Holies as just another room**  
**They murdered prisoners of war**

**Then**.....as an act of rebellion against the previous Temple leaders.....the corrupt **These Zealots did the unthinkable**

They ordained a common man.....Phanni....to be high priest.....to stand in the Holy

- **And it does seem that the Christians at that time in Jerusalem**
- **Saw this as the fulfillment.....And they fled Jerusalem in their droves**
- **To a mountainous region where they settled**

***Eusebius writing in the fourth century wrote:***

***"The whole body, however, of the church at Jerusalem....removed from the city and lived at a certain town beyond the Jordan called Pella. Here, those who believed in Christ removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself and the whole land of Judea. The divine justice for their crimes against Christ and His apostles finally overtook the Jews, totally destroying the whole generation."***

- **Here we see the compassion of Jesus for**....flowing through  
**As He urges** them to urgently flee at that time

**To take just what they need with them**.....and to guide against deception  
**Even if** such deception is accompanied by signs and wonders  
**FOR There will be those** who claim to be the Messiah returning to earth

### **But it will not be the case**

**and in the next section** ....Jesus tells them why it will not be the case

**For in verses 24-27**.....He answers their Question about the end of the Age  
He gives them and us information about His coming.....  
**So that we will not be fooled by imposters**

- **In v24 He tells His disciples** that it will be in a time after that distress  
**After that tribulation** that would be the destruction of the Temple

**When it happens it will be accompanied by immense signs in the heavens**  
**So immense that no one will be able to ignore it**

- **Indeed all will see the Son of Man coming in Glory**
- **And He will send His angels to gather His elect**

- **But of course that is the Final Event on this world's calendar**
- **And although Jesus wanted His disciples then to know about that**

**His greater concern for those first century Christians**  
**Was that they be ready to flee Jerusalem when the time came**

**So in v28-31** He returns again to His initial warning...form of a parable

**You know when you** see the tender leaves....fig tree.....that summer is coming  
**So when you see the things** I have talked about....The wars.....and esp the Temple  
 Don't hesitate go  
 Because these terrible things will happen in your lifetime.....In this generation.

**Then in 32-37** Jesus returns to the subject that every believer at times thinks about  
**The Day of His return**

- **That will happen He says.....But only God the Father knows when**  
 And He means to keep it a surprise

**Like a man** who goes away and leaves his servants to look after his house/ business  
**Every one has his own work to do**  
 One is even given the charge of keeping a special look out for the Master

- **But He tells no one when He will return**  
**Because** he wants nothing to detract from them being about His business

**He wants them to be constantly doing the task he has given them to do**

**That, says Jesus.....**

**IS the most important thing you need to know about my return**

- Not the date
- Nor the season

**But that it will happen**

**And when it does.....**God wants to find all His people....busy about his business

**Now I know that this is a big chapter to look at in one sitting**  
**But before we leave it.....let me stress this last thing:-**

### **1. Here we see God the Son who cares:**

**Jesus knew what His followers would go through**  
**He never promised** us a life of ease with no problems or difficulties  
**But a life of discipleship that bring cost as well as great benefit**

**And here in this passage** we sense His compassion.....feel His concern

- **Jesus knows the suffering that each of us will go through**  
**The sufferings** associated with life itself.....**Sickness....Hardship**  
**And how the enemy** will use the hard things...against us.....

- The sufferings associated with ministering for Him
- The persecution that comes in all shapes and sizes
- The let downs....the betrayals.....the perseverance demanding problems

**He knows that at times these things will happen ....and he cares**  
**And He stays alongside each of us**

## **2. Here also we see God the Spirit who enables**

**Only once is he referred to.....And there** He gives the words...when a defence  
**But the Holy Spirit** is constantly enabling us through the struggles we have

**He stands alongside** us when the pain is greatest.....and comforts us as we pray  
**He holds back** the evil powers that would otherwise overwhelm  
**He carries us** through the deep waters.....he gives us **His special peace**

## **3. Here especially we see God the Father who knows**

- **He knows the Day when the Son will return**
- **He knows the hour when evil will at last be conquered**
- **He knows our days and He knows our future**

**Would we wish for such knowledge to be in the hands of any others**  
**For only Almighty God has the power to bring His plan to its Glorious End**

**For no power in earth or in Heaven can stand against Him**  
 He is mighty and awesome and all-powerful

## **And he calls us to trust and to watch**

**Not to be part time Christians.....But full time pursuers of his truth**  
**His will.....His purpose.....His kingdom.**

