

77 Mark 13:1-13

Not Yet

Text

13:1 And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” 2 And Jesus said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

3 And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?” 5 And Jesus began to say to them, “**See that no one leads you astray.** 6 Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he!’ and they will lead many astray. 7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, **do not be alarmed.** This must take place, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

9 “**But be on your guard.** For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. 10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, **do not be anxious** beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Introduction

As we proceed through this chapter in Mark, I am going to be giving some explicit rules of interpretation so that you know how I am approaching this text as well as provide some tools for your own Bible study. Last week I gave a rather extended introduction explaining the need for background and context in studying a biblical passage. This week I'll give a brief comment on the use of history.

The question of interpretation should not hinge on history. History may inform our interpretation. In as much as we can learn about the culture and people and places that may provide some richness to our study. In some cases it may be a deciding factor between two possible interpretations. That said, interpretation is principally about the text. Thus if we have a good interpretation from the text itself, we ought to let that stand on its own rights. The liberal

schools of the 20th century gave history too much interpretive power. They would say, for instance, that Pilot never existed and that Lke made him up because we have no record of any such ruler. Archeology has since turned up evidence. There are scores of accusations regarding the reliability of the NT records which were later proved to be incorrect by the discoveries of archeology. Thus it is wrong to overturn a clear witness of the existence of a person like Pilot just because we haven't found in other evidence of him. The text may stand on its own accord. There are many things we would take to be true because that is what the text says regardless of whether or not that person or place or event was ever recorded anywhere else in history. Thus when I make the statement that this part of the Olivet discourse happened in the first century, I do that because I believe the *text* indicates it, and not because I have verified it all from extra-biblical sources. Conversely, those who take the opposite viewpoint will say something like, since this event did not happen in history, then it must be future. Thus they take history as their interpretive scheme in opposition to the textual time indicators. That said, history can corroborate an interpretation. Thus I will provide historical examples as we go along.

Not Yet

There has been a lot of speculation in the last 100 years about when Jesus will return. It has always been a popular subject through the centuries, but surely the last 100 years has seen an explosion in, indeed a preoccupation with, end times. Many people have taken most of Matthew 24 as referring exclusively to the second coming of Christ. There is a website out there that has a rapture index function. It is based, in the first part, upon the conviction that the church is going to be raptured (that is taken off the earth) before the Great Tribulation. It is based, in the second part, on the conviction that Matthew 24 speaks about the end of the world. This index catalogs 45 different factors that are "signs" of the end.

1. False Christs	3	18. Ecumenism	5	35. Date Settings
2. Occult	3	19. Globalism	4	36. Volcanoes
3. Satanism	2	20. Tribulation	3+1	37. Earthquakes
4. Unemployment	5	Temple	5	38. Wild Weather
5. Inflation	4	21. Anti-Semitism	5	39. Civil Rights
6. Interest Rates	2	22. Israel	4	40. Famine
7. The Economy	4-1	23. Gog (Russia)	5	41. Drought
8. Oil Supply/Price	4	24. Persia (Iran)	3	42. Plagues
9. Debt and Trade	5	25. The False Prophet	4	43. Climate
10. Financial unrest	4-1	26. Nuclear Nations	4-1	44. Food Supply
11. Leadership	5	27. Global Turmoil	5	45. Floods
12. Drug abuse	4	28. Arms Proliferation	4	Rapture Index 164
13. Apostasy	4	29. Liberalism	3	Net Change -2
14. Supernatural	1	30. The Peace Process	3	Updated Aug 3, 2009
15. Moral Standards	3	31. Kings of the East	3	
16. Anti-Christian	3	32. Mark of the Beast	3	
17. Crime Rate	4	33. Beast Government	2	
		34. The Antichrist		

I checked it this last week and found that the rapture index is at 164.
Rapture Index of 100 and Below: Slow prophetic activity

Rapture Index of 100 to 130: Moderate prophetic activity
Rapture Index of 130 to 160: Heavy prophetic activity
Rapture Index above 160: Fasten your seat belts

We are apparently in the fasten your seat belts zone. Let me make a few general observations here. In verse 5 Jesus says, "See that no one leads you astray." After mentioning some things Jesus says in verse 7, "but the end is not yet." Jesus mentions a few other things but again says in verse 10, "These are but the beginning of the birth pains." The point of this section is that these are not the signs. "The end is *not* yet" The entire scheme of the aforementioned website is based on the faulty notion that these are signs of the end. But that is exactly what they are not. But if they are not signs of the end, then why in the world did Jesus mention them? The answer is in verse 5. He starts off this section by saying "See that no one leads you astray." The purpose of including these things is so that they will not mistake all of these things for the end. It is our propensity, it seems, when things are rough and there are difficulties, to think that the end must be near. But this is the exact thing that Jesus warns us against. The end is not yet. It is akin to someone giving you directions somewhere saying, "You'll go past the city park, over the river, and then you will see signs for your exit." These are markers that you can expect to encounter along the way but when they come do not think that you have missed your turn. These should not be confused as the signs themselves. He explicitly says the end is not yet.

1st Century Markers

That alone should temper our efforts to find the end in wars and rumors of wars. But there is another reason: this text has markers of a 1st century fulfillment. We ran over many indicators last week when we considered the context. Just briefly: All three synoptic writers record this discourse as the climax of the confrontation with the existing leaders of Israel. Jesus said that the filling up of the guilt will surely come upon this generation.

As they were leaving the temple, the disciples pointed to Herod's temple in awe. Jesus, in response, says, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." Still talking about Herod's temple the disciples ask in verse 4, "When will these things be?" It seems most reasonable that the rest of our text this morning has to do with the 1st century destruction of that temple, especially when Herod's temple no longer exists.

Luke records Jesus' lament in chapter 19 in which Jesus says, "For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." This was to come upon that generation because they were the ones who did not know the time of their visitation. It makes no sense to destroy some other generation when it was the first century generation that did not know the time of his visitation. Notice also that they are building embankments. That is an ancient warfare technique. Walls are of little use in a day of planes and helicopters that can fly right over, smart missiles that can strike from a distance, and tanks that can punch through the walls anyway. It all speaks of 1st century fulfillment.

Be Not Led Astray

3 And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"

In verse 4, the disciples ask, "When will these things (*tauta*) be?" and what will be the sign when all these things (*panta tauta*) are about to be accomplished?" I will revisit those Greek phrases in a later sermon.

5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.

There were false Christs in the first century as John records in **1 Jn 2:18** "Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour."

7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Josephus describes a great deal of turmoil in his works. The *Annals of Tacitus* mentions "disturbances in Germany," "commotions in Africa," "commotions in Thrace," "insurrections in Gaul," "intrigues among the Parthians," "the war in Britain," and "the war in Armenia" (cf. DeMar, 62).

There will be earthquakes in various places;

Acts 16:26 "and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened."

These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

there will be famines.

Acts 11:27-29 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). 29 So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

Rom 15:25-28 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. 28 When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will leave for Spain by way of you.

1 Cor 16:1-5 Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me. 5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia,

Application

The immediate application was to the disciples and the first century Christians. "The gospel must be proclaimed. Nothing should hinder its progress. When you see these things (wars, earthquakes etc) do not run away and hide. Stay where you are, keep preaching, keep teaching. When it is time, I will give you a clear sign. So do not be led astray! I want you to focus on your task." That seems to be the most immediate point of application.

Matthew Henry comments, "They expected to be told when these things should be, to be let into that secret; but this caution is a check to their curiosity, 'What is that to you?' Mind your duty, follow me, and be not seduced from following me." That is the best advice we can receive. Be not seduced from following Christ.

Be diligent! Stay your course! Let me close with an extended quote from John Angell James:

A revived church is the best hope of a lost world.

A revived ministry the best hope of a dormant church.

Under 'a great show of outward profession', there is a lamentable deficiency of vital godliness in our churches. Much of the prevailing benevolence and activity of the church, are a mere substitute for spiritual religion--rather than the expression of vital godliness.

In our churches, it is easy to perceive . . .

how much more welcome is the 'humorous'--than the serious;

how much more anxious the audience is to be 'entertained'--than to be edified;

how much greater homage is paid to the 'talent' of the preacher--than to his piety!

In fact, our public meetings sometimes assume rather the character of 'religious amusements'--than pious worship!

It ought never to be forgotten that a church meeting, if rightly understood, is a company of people brought together to carry out the design for which the Son of God expired upon the cross! Surely the frame of our minds, and the tone of the sermons, and the spirit and tendency of the whole worship service, ought to be in strict harmony with such a purpose.

Yet many of our church meetings have rather lowered, than elevated the tone of our piety, and thus enfeebled our real strength for carrying on this great work.

Eminent piety is essential to eminent usefulness!