

## GOOD NEWS FROM THE KING

A Study of the Gospel According to Mark

Mark 13

Holy Bible, New International Version ©2011

*"So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time."* Mark 13:23

**Pray for the Holy Spirit to open your heart to his word.**

**First read Mark 13 to get a sense of the whole chapter.**

Jot down any thoughts and questions you may have.

**Reread Mark 13:1–4.**

1. As the disciples marvel over the magnificence of the temple, what does Jesus prophesy as he departs from it for the last time? (v. 2)



**Prophecy Fulfilled:**

Jerusalem and the temple were completely destroyed by Roman forces under Emperor Titus in A. D. 70.

2. Peter, James, John, and Andrew have made their way with Jesus to the Mount of Olives. The four disciples "must have believed that the destruction of the temple would introduce the end times."<sup>1</sup> What, therefore, do they ask Jesus in private? (vv. 3–4)

**Reread Mark 13:5–23.**

3. Jesus answers the disciples' questions by telling them to "watch out" (v. 5) and to "be on your guard" (vv. 9, 23). He gives them neither the specific time nor the sign they are looking for but warns them of certain dangers ahead.  
Skim verses 5–22 and list some of the dangers he mentions.

4. Why must the disciples – and we – remain “on guard” when these sorts of dangers threaten? (vv. 5, 7, 22; 2 Corinthians 11:3; \* Jeremiah 23:25–32)
  5. Would you be as spiritually vigilant or watchful of your life if you knew the exact timing of God’s plan? Explain.
  6. How are the sufferings listed in verses 5–8 like “the beginning of birth pains” (v. 8c)? ( Romans 8:18–25)
  7. In verses 9–13, Jesus warns the disciples of “the bitter persecution they will assuredly suffer for their faith....”<sup>2</sup> Believers in Jesus should expect opposition from an unbelieving world (John 15:18–21; 2 Timothy 3:12–13). How have you seen or experienced persecution “on account of [Jesus]” (v. 9)?
  8. What good promises are embedded within the description of persecution in verses 9–13?
- v. 10

How do these promises encourage you to stand firm in the midst of persecution and suffering?

9. This chapter begins with Jesus' prophecy that the temple will be destroyed. What does he tell believers to do immediately when they see Roman occupation forces approaching Jerusalem? (vv. 14–16; Luke 21:20–22)

In verse 14, the language about “the abomination that causes desolation” is taken from prophetic visions of the future in Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. Bible scholars think Daniel’s words were first fulfilled in 168 B. C. when Antiochus Epiphanes erected a statue of Zeus in the temple, and secondly when Roman forces invaded Jerusalem and profaned the temple in 70 A.D.

10. For whose sake will God shorten the terrors to come? (v. 20)

**Reread Mark 13:24–27.**

“THE HOPE OF Jesus’ coming enables Christians to endure any affliction, but Jesus gives no precise timetable about how long it will take for the end to come after the temple’s destruction. ... He simply says, ‘But in those days, following that distress.’ ... He expects his disciples to be ready for anything anytime. Busying oneself with calculations about dates is thus a fruitless exercise that can only distract from the mission that God has called the church to do – to preach the gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

11. Verses 24–27 speak of the end time. What will happen on that day when Jesus returns?  
vv. 24–25

v. 26

v. 27


**Reread Mark 13:28–37.**

12. Jesus concludes his discourse with two parables. “These things” in the parable of the fig tree (vv. 28–30) “probably refers not to the events of 13:24–27 (for they *are* the end), but the events of vv. 5–23”<sup>4</sup> signaling “the beginning of birth pains” (v. 8c). Considering the dire prophecies of chapter 13, what comfort does Jesus’ promise in verse 31 give?

13. In verse 4 the disciples ask Jesus, "When will these things happen?" How does Jesus answer this question? (v. 32)
14. The parable of the doorkeeper (vv. 34–37) refers to the sudden return of the Son of Man.
- a. Like the doorkeeper, how are believers to live until Jesus comes again? (vv. 33, 36–37)
  - b. What do these commands mean in your day-to-day life?

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This lesson on Mark's Gospel is adapted from "Life of a Servant" by New Life Glenside Women's Bible Study, 2002–2003.

\*  indicates the passage is for further study.

<sup>1</sup> R. Alan Cole, "Mark" in *New Bible Commentary: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*, consulting editors D. A. Carson et al., (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1994), 970.

<sup>2</sup> R. Alan Cole, *Mark*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 281.

<sup>3</sup> David E. Garland, *Mark*, The NIV Application Commentary, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 500.

<sup>4</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, Mark Study Notes contributed by Hans F. Bayer, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 1923.