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Mark 13

Things to Come

Do you sometimes feel as if the world is spinning out of control? Terrorism, wars, oppression by dictators, earthquakes, famine, persecution for one's faith, corruption in business and politics; these things are not new. The people in Jesus' day resented the domination of Rome. During his last week, Jesus prophesies about two major events: the fall of Jerusalem, and his own second coming. He speaks in terms of Jewish history familiar to the Jews of his day. As you read this chapter, what warnings and what encouragement does Jesus give his disciples?

Read Mark 13:1-8

1. Why does one of the disciples initiate this conversation?

What does Jesus say about the temple?

Note: One of the wonders of the world of that day, the temple was built of stones as large as forty feet long, twelve feet high, and eighteen feet wide. It is little wonder that their size and splendor impressed the Galileans. The temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. at the fall of Jerusalem, less than fifty years after Jesus made this prediction.

2. What do these four disciples want to know about Jesus' prophecy? Why?
3. Instead of answering their question immediately, against what danger does Jesus warn them (verses 5-6)?
4. To the people affected, what Jesus describes in verses 7 and 8 would surely seem to indicate the end of the world, but Jesus says, ***“Do not be alarmed.... The end is still to come.... These are the beginning of birth pains.”*** What types of things will happen (verses 7-8)?

Read Mark 13:9-13

5. In addition to the general calamities, what specific troubles does Jesus predict for his followers?

What job will the Christians have?

For whom is the message of the ***gospel*** intended? See Mark 1:1, 15 for previous references to the gospel, which is literally translated ***good news***.

6. What commands and promise does Jesus give to his persecuted followers?

Why would a person be tempted to be anxious about what he or she is going to say?

7. Why is the persecution described in verse 12 the hardest to bear?

What is the reason for the persecution and what response is called for (verses 9, 13)?

8. From this paragraph, what do you think the church should be doing in the world today?

Read Mark 13:14-23

*Note: The **sacrilegious object that causes desecration** (NLT) or the **abomination that causes desolation** (NIV), would remind Jesus' hearers of the prophecy in Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. They would also remember when Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of Syria, captured Jerusalem, set up an altar to Zeus in the temple, sacrificed swine on that altar, and turned the courts of the temple into public brothels (about 170 B.C.). In mentioning the **abomination that causes desolation**, Jesus warns that such a thing will happen again.*

9. What specific sign, warning, and advice does Jesus give (verses 14-16 and Luke 21:20-22)?

10. Why do women and children suffer most during sudden calamity (verses 17-20)?

How and why does the Lord show his mercy (verse 20)?

Note: The Christians of Jerusalem did heed the words of Jesus and fled the city before its siege and subsequent fall in 70 A.D. They thereby escaped the siege and destruction in which 97,000 were captured and 1,100,000 died from hunger and the sword.

11. Against what danger other than physical danger does Jesus warn (verses 21-23 and 5-6, 13)?

Why should you not be swayed by signs and wonders?

What forms do false prophets and false messiahs take today?

Read Mark 13:24-27

12. How does Jesus say that his return (the coming of the Son of Man) will be clearly distinguishable from that of all false messiahs and prophets (verses 21-22, 26)? Compare Matthew 24:23-27, noting especially verse 27.

13. What things does Jesus say will accompany the second great crisis event?

How does the change from **you** (verse 11) to **they** (NASB) or **people** (verse 26) indicate that the second event would be in a different age than the first?

14. How will Jesus Christ come again?

What will he do when he comes?

Read Mark 13:28-37

15. What further teaching does Jesus give about the timing of events?

How does verse 32 substantiate the thought that verse 30 does not refer to Jesus' second coming?

*Note: **All these things** in verse 30 is generally held to refer to the things foretold concerning the fall of Jerusalem, which took place in 70 A.D. within the lifetime of those who heard Jesus speak.*

16. Considering the prophecies of the chapter, what comfort does Jesus' promise give (verse 31)?

17. In verses 33-37, what does Jesus' illustration emphasize?

SUMMARY

1. Describe the two major events foretold in this chapter.

2. In what practical ways can you keep alert, guarding against spiritual deception?

CONCLUSION

Those who disregarded Jesus' prophecy concerning the fall of Jerusalem did so to their own peril. Some people today disregard his words about his coming again in power. But Jesus declares that history is moving toward its end. God directs the course of history and its culmination.