



Mark 13

"It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)."

(Mark 13:1-23).

Reading and Study Guide for the week of July 9-16, 2023

Memory Verse for the Gospel of Mark: *Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."* (Mark 8:34)

This week, read Mark 13. On Sunday, July 16: Pastor John will be preaching on the theme, **"It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)."** (Mark 13:1-23). Providing the people with signs of the times, Jesus prepared them for coming persecution. Jesus taught on the coming end times, not to increase our anxiety in the future, but to increase our activity in the present.

Some questions to answer and think about this week with your family or Community Group:

Signs of the End of the Age - Mark 13:1-31

1. What have you read or been taught about the Second Coming of Christ?
2. What do you find confusing or difficult to understand about what the Bible says about the future?
3. How did Jesus use the conversation of His disciples as an opportunity to teach? (13:1-2)
4. What did Jesus' disciples ask Him privately on the Mount of Olives? (13:3-4)
5. How did Jesus respond to His disciples' question? (13:5)
6. What was Jesus' main reason for telling His disciples what signs would precede the end of the age? (13:5)
7. What must happen before Christ returns? (13:10)
8. What did Jesus tell His followers to do to be assured of eternal life? (13:12-13)
9. What will be the greatest temptation during the "days of distress"? (13:21-23)
10. What signs from this passage do you think have already been fulfilled?
11. What can we do to avoid being deceived by false teachings about God or spiritual matters?
12. What can you read or do this week to strengthen your hold on the truth about Christ?

Life Application Bible Notes - Mark 13:1-31

In Mark 13, often called the Olivet discourse, Jesus talked a lot about two things: the end times and his second coming. Jesus was not trying to encourage his disciples to speculate about exactly when he would return by sharing these prophecies with them. Instead, he urges all his followers to be watchful and prepared for his coming. If we serve Jesus faithfully now, we will be ready when he returns.

13:1, 2 About 15 years before Jesus was born (20 B.C.), Herod the Great began to remodel and rebuild the Temple, which had stood for nearly 500 years since the days of Ezra (Ezra 6:14, 15). Herod made the Temple one of the most beautiful buildings in Jerusalem, not to honor God, but to appease the Jews whom he ruled. The magnificent building project was not completely finished until A.D. 64. Jesus' prophecy that not one stone would be left on another was fulfilled in A.D. 70, when the Romans completely destroyed the Temple and the entire city of Jerusalem.

13:3ff The disciples wanted to know when the Temple would be destroyed. Jesus gave them a prophetic picture of that time, including events leading up to it. He also talked about future events connected with his return to earth to judge all people. Jesus predicted both near and distant events without putting them in chronological order. Some of the disciples lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This event would assure them that everything else Jesus predicted would also happen. Jesus warned his followers about the future so that they could learn how to live in the present. Many predictions Jesus made in this passage have not yet been fulfilled. He did not make them so that we would guess when they might be fulfilled but to help us to be spiritually alert and prepared at all times as we wait for his return.

13:3, 4 The Mount of Olives rises above Jerusalem to the east. From its slopes a person can look down into the city and see the Temple. Zechariah 14:1-4 predicts that the Messiah will stand on this very mountain when he returns to set up his eternal Kingdom.

13:5-7 What are the signs of the end times? There have been people in every generation since Christ's resurrection claiming to know exactly when Jesus would return. No one has been right yet, however, because Christ will return on God's timetable, not ours. Jesus predicted that before his return, many believers would be misled by false teachers claiming to have revelations from God. According to Scripture, one clear sign of Christ's return will be his unmistakable appearance in the clouds, which will be seen by all people (13:26; Revelation 1:7). In other words, you do not have to wonder whether a certain person is the Messiah or whether these are the "end times." When Jesus returns, *you will know* beyond a doubt, because it will be evident to all true believers. Beware of groups who claim special knowledge of Christ's return because no one knows when that time will be (13:32). Be cautious about saying, "This is it!" but be bold in your total commitment to have your heart and life ready for Christ's return.

13:9-11 As the early church began to grow, most of the disciples experienced the kind of persecution Jesus was talking about. Since the time of Christ, Christians have been persecuted in their own lands and on foreign mission fields. Though you may be safe from persecution now, your vision of God's Kingdom must not be limited by what happens only to you. A glance at a newspaper will reveal that many Christians in other parts of the world daily face hardships and persecution. Persecutions are an opportunity for Christians to witness for Christ to those

opposed to him. God's desire is that the Good News be proclaimed to everyone in spite of persecution.

13:11 Jesus was teaching the kind of attitude we should have when we must take a stand for the Good News. We don't have to be fearful or defensive about our faith because the Holy Spirit will be present to give us the right words to say.

13:13 To believe in Jesus and "endure to the end" will take perseverance because our faith will be challenged and opposed. Severe trials will sift true Christians from fair-weather believers. Enduring to the end does not earn salvation for us but marks us as already saved. The assurance of our salvation will keep us strong in times of persecution.

13:14 The "sacrilegious object that causes desecration" refers to the desecration of the Temple by God's enemies. This happened repeatedly in Israel's history: in 597 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar looted the Temple and took Judean captives to Babylon ([2 Chronicles 36](#)); in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes sacrificed a pig to Zeus on the sacred Temple altar ([Daniel 9:27](#); [11:30, 31](#)); in A.D. 70 when the Roman general Titus placed an idol on the site of the burned-out Temple after the destruction of Jerusalem. Just a few years after Jesus gave this warning, in A.D. 38, the emperor Caligula made plans to put his own statue in the Temple, but he died before this could be carried out.

13:17 Some Christian couples who are contemplating pregnancy have been discouraged by this verse. They wonder if kids should be brought into a world filled with sin, evil, and terror. Jesus was not making a general warning against pregnancy, however. Many times in history have had risks and drawbacks; no place or time is perfect. We must remember that God will look out for the welfare of our children as he has looked out for us.

13:20 The "chosen ones" are God's chosen people, those who are saved. See [Romans 8:29, 30](#) and [Ephesians 1:4, 5](#) for more on God's choice.

13:22 Is it possible for Christians to be deceived? Yes. So convincing will be the arguments and proofs from deceivers in the end times that it will be difficult *not* to fall away from Christ. If we are prepared, Jesus says, we can remain faithful. But if we are not prepared, we will turn away. To penetrate the disguises of false teachers we can ask: (1) Have their predictions come true, or do they have to revise them to fit what's already happened? (2) Does any teaching utilize a small section of the Bible to the neglect of the whole? (3) Does the teaching contradict what the Bible says about God? (4) Are the practices meant to glorify the teacher or Christ? (5) Do the teachings promote hostility toward other Christians?

13:31 The truth that heaven and earth will disappear is all that much more believable in our age of nuclear power and terrorism. Jesus tells us, however, that even though the earth will pass away, the truth of his words will never be changed or abolished. God and his Word provide the only stability in our unstable world. How shortsighted people are who spend all their time and energy learning about this temporary world and accumulating its possessions, while neglecting the Bible and its eternal truths!