

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 19, 2017

Mark 13:1-13
Trials and the End

I. Destruction (13:1-2)

A. Admiration (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!"

- Finally, after several controversies on Tuesday, Jesus and the disciples are leaving the Temple complex
- An unnamed disciple observed the "wonderful" stones and buildings of the temple complex
- What was Herod's temple like exactly?
 - Josephus' description... "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 splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the suns' 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."¹
 - Took 46 years to build Herod's great temple (John 2:20)
 - Known as one of the wonders of the ancient Roman world

B. Annihilation (13:2)

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."

- Jesus responds by prophesying the destruction of the temple
- After about 40 years, Herod's temple was destroyed by the Romans

II. Distractions (13:3-8)

A. The disciples' expectation (13:3-4)

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?"

¹ David E. Garland, Mark, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 490.

- The conversation had clearly progressed outside the temple to the Mount of Olives
- Mount of Olives was not very far from the temple
- The Temple would be in plain sight for the rest of Jesus' words in the chapter
 - "Opposite the temple" explains this in the text
- Peter, James, John and Andrew privately ask Jesus some follow up questions
- It is possible that they asked Him privately; yet, He chose to respond for all the disciples, not just the four

4 *"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"*

- It appears that the disciples asked two questions
- First, they asked "when?"
 - This appears to simply be the question of when the temple will be destroyed
- Second, they asked, "what sign will precede these things?"
 - This appears to be the question of what sign will take place before the temple is about to be destroyed
- How much do the disciples know in asking these questions?
 - Old Testament expectation showed they were thinking about the end times
 - Daniel 9:26-27 "And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."
 - Zechariah 14:1-3 "Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken... 3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle."
 - Parallel passage gives us more information
 - Matthew 24:3 "...Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

B. The distracting events (13:5-8)

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.

- Jesus lists several events and occurrences that will function as distractions about the end

- These are distractions because they will take place all throughout the period between Christ's first and second coming
- However, they will increase in magnitude as the end approaches much like labor pains intensify closer to the delivery of the baby
- First, there will be false Messiahs
 - *6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.*
 - Some will come in the name and identity of Christ
 - These imposters will lead "many" astray, so they will be effective in their work
 - In the early church, there were Jewish men who claimed to be Messiah or a representative of the Messiah
 - These men led various rebellions that garnered the support of many
 - However, these men were inevitably shut down and revealed to be impostors
 - In recent years, the people claiming to be Messiah have been somewhat laughable
 - However, Revelation reveals a different story when there will be leaders like the Antichrist and the False Prophet who will perform great signs and wonders to deceive many
- Second, there will be increased warfare
 - *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.*
 - The disciples could be led astray by the fact of wars or rumors of wars on the world landscape
 - Jesus states that the wars must take place
 - Jesus makes it clear that wars and their rumors are still not the end
 - "But the end is not yet" seems to indicate that this discussion is not merely about the destruction of the temple in 70 AD
 - Thus it is best to assume that the disciples' questions about the temple includes the expectation of the end
 - Even though the years after Christ were filled with warfare (particularly between the Romans and the Jews) Jesus makes it clear that these are just the norm
 - In fact, the last 2,000 years of history since Christ has contributed more than its fair share to this reality of warfare
 - Even so, according to Revelation 6 there will be increased warfare in the end as the "labor pains" increase before Christ comes
- Third, there will be natural disasters
 - *There will be earthquakes in various places;*
 - People have a sense of fear and urgency when they realize all the natural disasters that seem to come in frequent waves of devastation
 - Nonetheless, these natural disasters too will increase as the birth pains increase in approaching Christ's return and the end
- Fourth, there will be economic crisis

- *there will be famines.*
- Famines is naturally a result of economic crisis
- The recognition of world hunger gives testimony to this fact
- Once again, as Revelation 6 shows us, there will actually be increased economic woes as the end draws near
- These distractions must not be the focus
- They must be put in perspective
 - *These are but the beginning of the birth pains.*
 - False Messiahs, warfare, natural disasters and economic crises are only the beginning
 - These things will escalate to a greater level of intensity
 - That greater degree of intensity will be unmistakable labor based upon the seal judgments of Revelation 6

III. Difficulties (13:9-13)

A. Handed over to proclaim (13:9-11)

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.*

- First, Jesus identifies the reality of persecution for the disciples

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.*

 - Interrogated by councils
 - Sounds like Paul before the Sanhedrin
 - Beaten in synagogues
 - Sounds like Paul and Barnabas at Lystra
 - Stand before governors and kings
 - Jesus says this happens ultimately “for my sake”
 - The purpose will be “to bear witness before them”
 - Sounds like Paul before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa
 - Jesus gives the command “be on your guard” for the first time in this passage
 - Again in verse 23
 - Another way of saying “Be ready”
 - Peter said, “Don’t be surprised at the fiery trial that comes”
 - Paul said “All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”

- Second, Jesus identifies the importance of proclamation
 - *10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.*
 - What exactly does this mean?
 - Is the emphasis on “all the nations”?
 - Was Jesus really emphasizing the gospel going into every geographical nation?
 - Was Jesus emphasizing the gospel being heard in every language in existence?
 - Was Jesus emphasizing the gospel going to every community on the planet?
 - Perhaps, Jesus is simply stating that the priority (“first”) must rest upon the gospel being preached to the world
 - In Matthew 24:14, the similar statement appears to summarize the words that Jesus said before (vv. 4-13)
 - This seems to fit well with Jesus’ charge to the disciples at the end of His time on earth (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)
 - This also explains why Jesus is telling the disciples that they will be treated so poorly (vv. 9, 11)

- Third, Jesus comforted them with the Help of the Holy Spirit
 - *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.*
 - Jesus prophesies and promises that the disciples will be arrested and placed on trial
 - Jesus follows up the daunting prophecy with a word of encouragement and comfort
 - The disciples will be guided by the Holy Spirit in what they are to say
 - Jesus also gives the comfort that the Holy Spirit will embolden them to speak
 - “We must obey God rather than men”
 - “I’m on trial for belief in the resurrection”
 - “I appeal to Caesar”

B. Hated yet persevering (13:12-13)

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.

- Jesus identifies the hatred that awaits His disciples and followers
 - *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.*

- Jesus reveals the severity of the persecution that will be experienced among men
- People will actually turn against their own family
- People will actually give their family members over to death!
- Notice that the hatred is specifically in reference to Jesus' Name
 - Not a hatred based upon sports team rivalry
 - Not a hatred due to sinful behavior
 - Peter distinguishes between suffering for sin and suffering for doing what is right
- Jesus gives the ultimate comfort for people trying to follow Him
 - *But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*
 - Jesus gives another difficult promise, "you will be hated by all for my name's sake"
 - Endurance will pay off
 - Perseverance for these disciples means salvation for their souls
 - There is comfort in knowing that it is and will be well with their soul
 - How can you identify the true followers of Christ?
 - They are the ones who endure to the end of the time that God gives them on this earth