

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

(Also read my notes on Matthew 24 for a more detailed commentary)

Jesus' time on this earth was fast coming to a close and He knew it. This chapter is a part of His teaching to the disciples, but in more detail, specifically dealing with both the end of the Temple and the end of time itself.

No man knows the time when the earth and all creation will be burnt to nothing, to be replaced by a brand new heavens and earth. The timing of the end of Jerusalem was, however, imminent, as the Jews must have realised. Jesus tells His followers what to watch out for. The end of time is more complex but we can all recognise when wicked rulers turn the world into their own playground and everything is moving towards a one-world order. Also, the disasters and other signs are making themselves known.

The command given to the disciples is for us all to 'Watch'. We must stay awake to mortal and spiritual dangers as time starts to come to a close, and must be in good spiritual shape at all times. We cannot rest! Many of us have done that to our discredit and to the shame we bring upon the Lord's name because of it.

As we read this chapter with open Christian eyes, we should note the heaviness of the words, which should spur us to action. Let us all live as we ought, not blaming each other for every mistake or error, but lovingly trying to restore each other to what we should be in Christ. We all make mistakes!

Some will ignore all advice and counsel. Sadly, so be it, for we cannot run the life of another, even if he is a brother in Christ. We can only live as we ought and seek his restoration as a believer. Let us all look out for each other, in love, for no-one else will do so, particularly not those who hate us.

Verses 1&2

1.

And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

2.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

As Jesus left the Temple His disciples pointed out how marvellous was the architecture and building. Jesus, with His Great plan and coming demise, was not to be thwarted by talk of architecture! Instead, He prophesied that the Temple would fall and become a ruin. Of course, this would not happen for about another 37 years or so, but it's ruin was certain. We can be absolutely sure that if God says something will occur, then it will.

Verses 3-6

1.

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

2.

Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

3.

And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:

4.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Matthew tells us Jesus walked the half mile or so from Jerusalem and sat part-way up the Mount of Olives. Mark adds a small detail to that by saying Jesus sat "over against the temple". Thus, we know He sat either facing the Temple, or on a part of the mount that faced it. As He

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

sat, Peter, James, John and Andrew, asked him something in private. Note that whilst all 12 were apostles, not every one of them had the same strength of spirit or curiosity.

They asked Jesus when the temple would be destroyed. How would they know it was about to occur? The first thing Jesus did was to warn them: watch out for deceivers. He said that many would come and say "I am Christ", in order to deceive people. See how this would happen in the lifetime of the Apostles... it is not a recent phenomenon. As you will read in my notes on Matthew 24, the huge number of Jewish insurgents at that time were known as 'little-Messiahs', but they wanted freedom from Rome, using violence to get it. Their aim was not part of God's plan, and this is why Jesus warned the disciples to beware.

Today, many come calling themselves 'Christ'. Of course, they also die without effecting anything true at all! Yet, Christians are amongst those who follow these usurpers, including following false rulers like president Obama. Such is the falsity and foolishness of modern Christians (if we can call them that).

Verses 7-10

1.

And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

2.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.

3.

But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

4.

And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

It is unfortunate that so many believers tend to read this chapter wrongly and do not 'see' the truth. It is my view from scripture that half of the chapter is about the fall of Jerusalem and the latter half is about the end of time. (See my notes on Matthew 24 for a detailed examination).

Because of this confusion, many think that "wars and rumours of wars" only applies to the latter days, but this is an error. Can you see why? The text says "And when ye hear of..." so Jesus was telling the *Apostles* that these things would happen in *their* lifetime, as common speech patterns testify.

That these things would happen in their lifetime is repeated by "be ye not troubled". Jesus said these must happen, but they were only signs before the end. The end of what? The world? Again, no. We know this because Jesus was referring to the end of the Temple, which would be in 70 AD.

Some might argue that as 'end' is telos, and telos means the termination of all things. Yes, it does, but it can also mean the end of a series of events, or the close of an issue (depending on context), so this easily applies to the series of events that were prophesied as the end of the Jewish Temple. There have been many wars and rumours of wars since that time, and they will again feature towards the end of actual time... but this is not what Jesus is talking about in this verse.

There would be wars between nations (including the final war between Rome and the Jewish nation via its insurgents), with earthquakes in various places, famines and 'troubles'. But, they would only be the "beginnings of sorrows" leading up to the final destruction of the Temple and the Jewish nation.

With all this going on Jesus commanded the Apostles to watch out, for they would be captured and tried in both religious and civil courts; they would even be beaten in synagogues, and taken before rulers and kings because of their faith in Christ. And on each occasion they would stand

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

up true witnesses to the Lord. And, at the same time, the Gospel had to be preached to many countries.

Of course, this was accomplished by a variety of means, including the events of Acts 2 and the travels of Paul and other Apostles. Again note how these things would happen in the lifetimes of the Apostles, so we can pinpoint the timings fairly accurately. Do not be persuaded by systems, theories and denominational teachings – just follow scripture.

Verses 11-17

1.

But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

2.

Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

3.

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

4.

But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

5.

And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house:

6.

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

7.

But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

Jesus continues his warnings to the Apostles... some today wonder if they would have become His Apostles if they had known from the start what was to come. Yes, they would have, because these were no ordinary appointments; they were given their roles by God Himself, not by invitation but by deific command. Jesus called them and they instantly went with Him. Just as God destined Pharaoh to hell, so He destined these men to accompany His Son.

Jesus warned that they would be taken prisoner by rulers, and tried for being the Saviour's agents. But, they were not to write their defence beforehand. Rather, they were to wait until the time and let the Holy Spirit fill their mouths. Many Christians panic about what to do or say if they are taken by rulers. No need for it – just let the Spirit tell you at the time. Our relationship with God is active and dynamic. It means God actually leads us and talks with us on a daily basis... not that we see much evidence in today's Christian lives: they try their best not to admit to being Christian!

Jesus warned they would be hated because of their Christianity. Yet, most Christians work very hard to appear 'reasonable' and 'balanced' to the world. This is why we are now overrun by homosexuals, paedophiles, wickedness of all kinds, and bad rulers. It is because Christians do not want to be hated for their faith, so they prefer no faith to speak of, so that they can be accepted by society and rulers.

It is a fact that Jesus came to die. In similar fashion we are His disciples, who can *expect* to be mocked and attacked. It is part of our walk in life – if we walk aright. Expect nothing less if you are true to the Lord. How many readers know what it is for the Holy Spirit to speak through them? I am not talking about the fake messages supposedly given to charismatics.

Have you known God to speak through you when your faith is held in question, or you are attacked? If not, then you have not been doing much in the Lord's name! I know this because

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

when we speak for the Lord we WILL be attacked. Therefore, if you are not attacked you are not up to much. Simple. And if you do not openly defend the Lord by honest faith hated by others, you will not hear the Spirit speak through you.

In the past I have known this provision... but reformed folks hate to say so. They insist God is not acting today. They may as well claim, along with unbelieving theologians, that 'God is dead', because the so-called 'faith' they have is almost non-existent! What glory can they bring to a God they think is inactive?

In the time before the end of the Jewish nation, their own families and friends would hand them over to the authorities, for fear of retribution from their masters. Is this not exactly what happened in Nazi Germany and communist Russia? It is what people do when pushed into fear, even if it means the death of those they falsely accuse.

Again, I repeat the dictum: "And ye shall be hated of all (men) for my name's sake". Are you of this small band? Are you a true believer? Do you speak as you ought and not remain silent? Then you already know these attacks on your person. For myself, I have known them from the very start of my Christian life, and it does not stop! Expect no mercy, not even from those who say they are your brethren. Instead, stay as you are, true to God, and "the same shall be saved".

The word 'saved', *sōzō*, can mean salvation itself, but it does not, in this case, mean salvation of the soul. Rather, it means to be kept safe from danger, or can even mean to be saved from penalties exacted by men. Otherwise, if we interpret it in the salvation sense, we are faced with the idea of works saving our souls, which is an Arminian lie.

Verse 14 again refers to events that will come in the lifetime of most of Jesus' disciples: the "abomination of desolation". That is, the destruction of the Temple of God, which was pulled down to its foundations and burnt. At that time, says Jesus, let Jews run for the hills to hide, for the Romans would rain terror upon them.

If a man is on the roof of his house, and he sees this happening, he must not even gather together a few things, but must run fast for his own safety. The man working in the field should not even go to the edge of the field to get his coat – just run! And women who are pregnant or

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

feeding a baby will have a particularly rough time, because they cannot move fast enough. See how Jesus has concern for the nation, even though He knew it would agree to His death?

Verses 18-23

1.

And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

2.

For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

3.

And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

4.

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not:

5.

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

6.

But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

Jesus said they should pray this calamity will not occur in winter, when the weather would be against them. There would be great affliction, so bad as to eclipse any other warring evils known to men up to that time. And it happened as Jesus prophesied – the 'ethnic-cleansing' by the Romans was severe in the extreme, bringing widespread slaughter, and scattering still-living Jews worldwide. And, unless God showed mercy towards the Jews every Jew would be

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

slaughtered or driven out.

People would claim the Messiah was amongst them, but they would be lying. There would be false Christs and false preachers. They would even display signs and wonders, miracles, in an attempt to bring Jews to their side. Even 'the elect', believers, would initially be caught out, but not for long. This is what has been happening since the early part of the 20th century, through Pentecostalism and latterly through charismaticism, both of which make claims to authenticity. But, they are false – do not listen to them. Jesus has "foretold you all things". Only those who pretend to be elect will follow these delusions.

We regularly receive complaints from Pentecostalists, who say they are not as I describe them in my articles. They wish to distance themselves from the evils of Azusa Street, their formal beginnings. But, you cannot distance yourself from your birth-mother! They can argue all they like, but if they maintain a Pentecostal brand-name, they remain as judged.

Verses 24-27

1.

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

2.

And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

3.

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

4.

And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

After warning about the end of the Jewish nation, Jesus turns to the end of time. "After that tribulation" does not mean immediately after, but simply that the end of time will come some time after the fall of Jerusalem. The sun and moon will go dark, there will be unheard-of movement of heavenly bodies, and everything will be shaken out of their order created by God. When this is seen from earth, Jesus the Lord will return in the clouds, "with great power and glory". At last He would be seen for what He really is – God; creator and destroyer of all things.

As He comes He will cause His angels to gather up the elect from around the world, both living and dead, who will be with Him as the peoples of the earth are judged. It will be the terrifying end to all who rejected God and those who acted wickedly against Him... including current rulers, who think they can do as they please. On this note let me remind you that we are not commanded to pray for rulers simply because they are rulers. We should pray for their support only if they do God's bidding. Otherwise we are actually praying to God to give credence to people who hate Him!

Verses 28-32

1.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

2.

So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

3.

Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

4.

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

5.

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

Jesus then explains things this way: when a fig tree is ready to bloom, it is tender and grows new leaves. That is how farmers know summer is close. In the same way, when we see certain activities in the world, we will know the end is coming close, and could very well be right in front of us. We will not know the exact time of the end, but it will come suddenly. To confirm His words, Jesus told the disciples that whilst everything created will vanish, His words and prophecies will remain true. Why, then, do some Christians try to manipulate and change God's words? Why do they prefer the teachings of men, who can make mistakes, to what God says in scripture?

Verses 33-37

1.

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

2.

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

3.

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

4.

Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

5.

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Jesus told the disciples to pray for safety and wisdom, because they did not know when the end

Mark 13

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 06 August 2015 08:26

would come. They should pray for personal spiritual well-being, that they may function properly, as believers. The same applies to us all; we must all live as if Jesus were to return immediately – because that is how swift His return will be. When He comes again we must be found holy and pure people.

Jesus advised that He was on a journey, and has left instructions for His servants. Scripture contains those instructions and we must take them seriously. He also gave them authority – note that. We all have God's authority to live as saved men and women, and to speak as witnesses, acting on His behalf.

Each of us has been given a specific task by Christ, and should work at it... every one of us has a task and function within the Church. And the porter must watch and warn – these are the watchmen in the Church who must be on constant alert to world events and movements, whether within the Church or outside it.

“Watch ye therefore” because though we do not know the exact day and time of Christ's return, we do know it will happen. We must keep the lamps burning and our faith and witness strong. We must not be asleep or lax when He returns, but must always “Watch”. Let us help each other to do so.

© July 2010

---oOo---

{loadposition btm_address}