

Daily Bible Study

“Destruction Foretold”

Mark 1:1-4

April 15 – April 21, 2012

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –This week we begin our more specific look into **Mark 13** as we begin with a lesson entitled *Destruction Foretold*. We have previously introduced this chapter, which as mentioned is often called by many scholars and students the hardest in the Bible. As we begin to study it I would remind you that it is most important that we see the person and work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in this text than it is to “figure out” every detail without any uncertainty. That being said, it is important to look to the very details of Scripture and to learn what it is that is being taught. So let’s begin to study the details of **Mark 13** but to not obscure the bigger and biggest picture of all throughout Scripture; the person and work of Jesus. Read our text for the week, **Mark 13:1-4**: *“Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”*

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: *Father, teach me from Your Word as I study this piece of Scripture.*

TUESDAY – **Mark 13:1-4**: *“Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!” And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”* Before we get to the text verse by verse, let me say some final things by way of introduction. As you can see in our text it doesn’t take long and we are indeed talking about unpleasant things such as *Destruction Foretold*. The Bible is amazingly honest and clear in its speaking concerning life. It never hides the realities of both life and death. Good and evil, blessing and punishment, as well as eternal joy and eternal misery. We see both in this passage and its parallels death and destruction of created things. As the early church father Origen stated, “The death of trees, contaminated air and the pollution of the fruits of the earth—all these are signs of the final judgment”. There is so often, especially in prophetic Scripture passages an eternal and lasting significance to a more somewhat temporary or immediate illustration and application. We understand that these horrible realities of death, destruction, and

conflict actually point ahead to future and if I may, “fuller” realities. For example, the “wars and rumors of wars” among and between nations will not be the only thing brought to an end in the consummation of all things. These present and ongoing realities point in some degree point us and remind us of the final conflict between the clashing Kingdoms of Christ and Satan; a conflict which will forever and fully be resolved in the end. As we now begin, take heart Beloved that God wins. His way is sure, perfect and the best for us as His people. May the “unknown” element of prophetic teaching push us to the known element, for as Scripture has told us, “...*the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*” (**Revelation 19:10**).

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to be a serious student of Your Word. Help me see Jesus in all of Scripture. May I see the big picture of Your Son my Lord Jesus and His person and work. Give me strength and desire to obediently live in a way that pleases You as revealed to me from Scripture.

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 13:1**: “*Then as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!”* If you remember back, it was with a word of commendation for a poor but generous widow that Jesus now *went out of the temple*. Now in the company of His disciples, He heads toward the Mount of Olives. We read from Mark that, “*one of His disciples said to Him...*” Mark has “*one of His disciples*”, Matthew, “*His disciples*”, and Luke, “*some...*” Those seeking discrepancies or “contradictions” in order to discredit Sacred Scripture will point this variation out yet it is very easy to “solve” or make these statement’s agree. Remember each of the human authors of Scripture under the inspiration of God, The Holy Spirit, the divine author were writing in their own style and from their vantage point of any given situation. They recorded the incident as they were recalling it. Perhaps one disciple (Peter?) in his usual enthusiasm may have led the questioning about the grandeur and beauty of the temple caught up in exuberance. It is obvious that at some point the others joined in and followed into the questioning and they now are asking Jesus as individuals, but individuals with one voice. The question is put to Jesus, “*Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!*” Again, if we are to compare the gospel records we see they were commenting on the *stones* of the Temple, the *buildings* and Luke even adds the *donations* (gifts, offerings). They are obviously caught up in the grandeur of this magnificent place. In the minds of these men the words of Jesus still must have wrung out, when He told the leaders, “*Your house will be left to you desolate*” and they are having trouble thinking that while they looked at this seemingly immovable complex. The huge nature of this place must also have been in their thinking. We can learn much from reading Josephus as well as other historical sources which help us learn the magnificence and size of the Temple. Herod the Great used huge polished limestone that were native to this area in the building and stones of similar shape and material are still visible at the wailing wall in Jerusalem. After much reading concerning this magnificent Temple and its stones in particular, I have read figures concerning the size and massiveness of the Temple and of some stones used in its building. They range from smaller stones of a few tons up to cornerstones and

master course foundation stones weighing 50, 80, to 600+ tons; Remarkable! Josephus records stones sixty feet long, eleven feet high, eight feet deep, weighing more than a million pounds. This place was huge and the Temple complex itself covered about 35 acres with the Sanctuary and walls standing about 150 feet high. With this understanding of the magnitude of the Temple structure in mind it is no wonder there was surprise, sadness, and even anger by individuals at the thought of its destruction. Read these passages concerning the true foundation stone, Jesus: **Isaiah 28:16, Acts 4:11, Romans 9:33.**

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me recognize & trust in the foundation stone which the builders rejected, Your Son, our Lord Jesus. Thank You for such a sure foundation to build my life on.

THURSDAY – Mark 13:2-4: “*And Jesus answered and said to him, “Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”* Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, “*Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?*” We see Jesus answers the statements of awe from the disciples concerning the massive beauty and magnificence they were looking at. They were looking at what historians of antiquity say from a distance appeared to be like a mountain of marble covered with gold. This Temple was not the one built by Solomon in the tenth century B.C. as that had been destroyed in 587 B.C. by the Babylonians led by Nebuchadnezzar. After the Israelites returned from the Babylonian exile the Temple was rebuilt being completed around 516 B.C. then around 19 B.C. Herod the Great began a remodel of the Temple thus it became known by the name, Herod’s Temple. This remodeling work was still going on in Jesus’ time. This was the seemingly indestructible building at the center of awe and conversation. Looking at the text we see Jesus gives the stunning answer of, “*Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*” We do not read of any immediate reaction from the disciples but rather Mark records that *as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately...* As an important side note here; please notice that the disciples come to Jesus for answers and further explanation. We must learn beloved that when we need answers, help, guidance or anything to always approach God by faith in prayer and ask for His help and instruction (**Matthew 7:7-11, John 15:7-8, Hebrews 4:16, James 4:2-3**). If you think about what Jesus has just said, you could try and imagine what the disciples must be thinking and feeling. Jesus just declared that this masterpiece of architecture, most loved and cherished building by the worshipers (false and true) of Yahweh, source of joy and pride for these Jewish men, would be destroyed so that *not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* This is an incredibly devastating pronouncement on Jesus part. Another thing to notice is that the disciples do not question the truth of what He said but rather question its timing. Did they just hear Him correctly; this Temple, destroyed? O.K. but they ask, *when...* and give us *the sign when...*

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me understand that I need to commune with You through prayer and Your word in order to be instructed and lead. Help me to trust You by faith even when there are difficult things to hear, understand, and go through. Keep my looking at & seeking Jesus.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Mark 13:4: “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?” Here is where we begin to look at the text in detail in order to see what is it these men asked. For starters, note that both questions they ask contain the words, “these things”. Jesus uses this phrase in **verse 30**, when He says, “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place”. One question to consider is did Jesus have in mind the same *things* that the disciples did in the beginning of the chapter? This is a difficult question which has caused a lot of debate because by the time we get to **verse 30** Jesus has addressed not merely the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem but also His “coming”. As we continue in the chapter we will address these issues in greater detail and see where many of the things Jesus spoke about in **Mark 13** do in fact have a definite first-century fulfillment. Jesus first response which we will Lord willing study next time reminds us that the topic of future things is overflowing with potential for deception. He said, “Take heed that no one deceives you...” (**Mark 13:5**). This warning from Christ by context is for the disciples first but we must also take heed. In the light of the immediately preceding context here in Mark, *when will these things be?* would seem to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple only. But the grammar, particularly the word all in *the sign when all these things* may point us to a broader more inclusive meaning. Jesus in His answer by no means seems to limit himself to the events that were to occur in 70 A.D. (see **Mark 13:10, 27**). He knows and sees the centuries ahead and seems to include further future events in His answer. Mark and Luke seem to shorten what Matthew records more fully, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age? Matthew, written after Mark may be explaining the question more fully. Remember also the disciples would probably envision a catastrophe great enough to bring the Temple down to be one that would indicate the end of the world as well. They most likely think the time of the destruction of the temple, the Second Coming of Jesus, and the end of the age would happen at one time. Although a long period of time lies between Jerusalem’s fall and the culmination of all things there seems to be a connection between the judgment executed on the Jewish nation and the final judgment. Jesus in His answer seems to merge the temporal & eschatological as the OT prophets did.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for being in control of all things, even what is unknown to me.