

Mark 13:1-13 — “Teaching on the End-Times: The Beginning of the Tribulation - Birth Pains”

Mark 13, Matthew 24-25 & Luke 21 are parallel sermons/discourses & often called “The Olivet Discourse”

- Mark 13/Matt 24 is the longest recorded answer to any question that Jesus received in his ministry.
- Mark 13/Matt 24 is an end-times discourse of ‘comfort’/instruction before Christ would die & depart.

How does it apply to us?

- ★ **Teach you** [To know what will happen & In understanding society’s degradation]
- ★ **Encourage you** [For comfort in God’s sovereignty; In triumphing in Christ’s victory]
- ★ **Embolden you** [With urgency in soul-winning]
- ★ **Wake you up!** [holy living; beware of deceivers; stand strong; look up! maybe today!]

Background to the Olivet Discourse:

Note the PURPOSE:

Note the INTERPRETATION:

“Who or what will arbitrate among the various (non-literal) meanings suggested and decide which are to be accepted as authoritative and which are spurious? Short of saying that every person’s fancy is his or her own rule,

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there does not appear to be any final court of appeal ... There simply is NO justifiable criteria for setting boundaries once the interpreter departs from the normal usage of language” (Walter Kaiser)

Note the PLACEMENT:

Bible students have also used the term “Tribulation” to refer to a specific eschatological time of trouble, a special time of judgment from God that will come upon the entire world, will be unprecedented in its affliction, and will be culminated by the personal return of Jesus Christ to earth. There are many passages that anticipate this time of trouble under a variety of names, but two very special passages are Mark 13/ Matthew 24 and Revelation 6-19.

Mark 13 Full Outline:

- The **BEGINNING** of the Tribulation (5-13)
- The **MIDDLE** of the Tribulation (14-23)
- The **END** of the Tribulation (24-27)
 - *The applications of the Tribulation (28-37)*

1. The Setting (v.1-2)**2. The Questions (v.3-4) — Mark has 2 (Matt has the 3rd question):**

1. WHEN will Jerusalem’s destruction happen? (Mk 13.4a)
2. WHAT is the sign of Your coming/return (Matt 24:3b)
3. What is the SIGN of the end of the (present) age (Matt 24:3c)

THESIS — Jesus answers the question by helping them understand the “things of the end” so they will be *aware and alert*.

1. False Christs (Mark 13:5-6; Rev 6.2)**2. Great Conflicts (wars/rumors of wars) (Mark 13:7; Rev 6.4)**

3. Widespread Disasters (earthquakes, famines)**(Mark 13:8; Rev 6.5-6,8)**

Famine

Earthquakes

4. Severe Persecution (oppression, martyrdom) (Mark 13:9-13; Rev 6:9-11)**In verse 8 - they are called *birth pains* >> but this is not a hopeless term.**

- The figure of birth pains was commonly used by ancient Jewish writers, especially in regard to the end times. The great modern Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim wrote, “Jewish writings speak very frequently of the labor pains of Messiah.”
- the world at that time will be like a woman in travail - Isa 13:6-8; Jer 4:31; 22.20-23.
- they will come suddenly, build up gradually, and then lead to a time of terrible sorrow and tribulation and distress.
 - as a pregnant woman’s birth pains indicate that her child will SOON be born, so these universal, intense and bitter conflicts and catastrophes occur, it will mean that the end of this Age is near!!!!
- The birth-pangs signify the soon-coming birth of a NEW AGE, the Messianic Kingdom of Peace.
- The earth’s regeneration awaits the time when the Son of Man shall return in glory to assume His messianic throne on earth (Matt 19.28; Psalm 2)

Context of the Disciples & the Tribulation

- we must realize that the Olivet Discourse was given to disciples who “thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately” (Luke 19.11). Christ responds and again tells them the earthly kingdom they hope for will come — but it’s in the future.
- Jesus speaks of the “Abomination of Desolation” - a clear reference back to Daniel 9:27 - there is coming a time, a period, an era of 7-years = also called: “Daniels’ 70th week (a week = a period of 7-years) = it’s called the Tribulation.
- The AntiChrist will make a covenant with Israel for ONE week (for 7-years)
- But in the middle of the week - at the midpoint - 3 1/2 years - he will break the covenant.
- This is called the Abomination of Desolation — Jesus mentions it in Mark 13:14 (at the midpoint).
- The 70th week of Daniel is none other than the same period we know as the Tribulation.

Daniel says: “In the middle of the week” (Dan 9.27) = 3 1/2 years

It’s called “42 months” (Revelation 11.2; 13.5) = 3 1/2 years

It’s called one thousand two hundred sixty days = 3 1/2 years (Rev 12:6)

It’s called a time and times and half a time = 3 1/2 years (Dan 7:25; Rev 12:14)

** This is clear reckoning of *literal* time, days, years (not symbolic, but literal).

The believers in Mark 13 are believers who come to faith AFTER THE RAPURE (during the Trib period)
 The birth pains are those sufferings that have described believers of ALL eras of Church history — **but**
 these mentioned in Mark 13 specifically refer to the pains **only** within the 7-year future Tribulation period.

It was said of Horatius Bonar: As he would conclude his day's ministry, he would draw the curtains of his window and utter as he looked upward, "Perhaps tonight, Lord!" In the morning, as he awoke and looked out on the dawn of a new day, he would pray, looking up into the sky, "Perhaps today, Lord!"

O CHURCH ARISE

O church, arise, and put your armor on;
 Hear the call of Christ our captain.
 For now the weak can say that they are strong
 In the strength that God has given.
 With shield of faith and belt of truth,
 We'll stand against the devil's lies.
 An army bold, whose battle cry is love,
 Reaching out to those in darkness.

Our call to war, to love the captive soul,
 But to rage against the captor;
 And with the sword that makes the wounded whole,
 We will fight with faith and valor.

When faced with trials on every side,
 We know the outcome is secure.
 And Christ will have the prize for which He died:
 An inheritance of nations.

Come, see the cross, where love and mercy meet,
 As the Son of God is stricken;
 Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet,
 For the Conqueror has risen!
 And as the stone is rolled away,
 And Christ emerges from the grave,
 This victory march continues till the day
 Ev'ry eye and heart shall see Him.

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
 When sorrows like sea billows roll;
 Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
 It is well, it is well with my soul

It is well (it is well)
 with my soul (with my soul)
 It is well, it is well with my soul

My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought!
 My sin, not in part but the whole,
 Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
 The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
 Oh trump of the angel! Oh voice of the Lord!
 Blessèd hope, blessèd rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
 The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
 The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
 Even so, it is well with my soul.