CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Mark Chapter 13 —

The End of the Age
and the Coming of the Son of Man

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Mark Chapter 13 is the longest speech of Jesus in Mark's Gospel.

It is often called the **Olivet Discourse**, because Jesus gave it on the Mount of Olives.

It begins with a disciple admiring the beautiful temple.

Jesus answers with a shocking prediction.

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

The disciples ask when this will happen and what signs will come first.

Jesus speaks about wars, earthquakes, and famines.

He warns of false messiahs and persecution.

He speaks of a time of great distress.

And He promises that the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory.

Most of all, Jesus calls His followers to **watch**.

The word appears again and again.

Watch out for deception.

Watch yourselves in persecution.

Watch and be ready for His return.

A note on interpretation:

This is one of the most debated chapters in the Bible.

Jesus seems to speak about two great events.

The destruction of the temple, which happened when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

And His second coming at the end of the age.

Bible students disagree about which verses refer to which event.

Some see most of the chapter fulfilled in A.D. 70.

Some see most of it pointing to the future.

Many see both, with the first event as a preview of the second.

This study presents these views fairly.

All agree on the main message: do not be deceived, stand firm, and stay ready.

The chapter moves through seven movements:

- The Temple Will Be Destroyed (verses 1–2).
- Signs of the End (verses 3–8).
- Persecution of the Believers (verses 9–13).
- The Great Tribulation (verses 14–23).
- The Coming of the Son of Man (verses 24–27).
- The Lesson of the Fig Tree (verses 28–31).
- Keep Watch (verses 32–37).

The central truth of Mark 13 is:

Earthly things will pass away and hard times will come, but Jesus will return in power and glory, so His followers must refuse deception, stand firm in trials, spread the gospel to all nations, and stay watchful and ready.

I. LOOK AT THESE STONES

Mark 13:1 — A Disciple's Admiration

“As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, “Teacher, look at these massive stones and magnificent buildings!””

“As Jesus was leaving the temple.”

This was Jesus' last time leaving the temple in Mark.

“Look at these massive stones and magnificent buildings!”

The temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world.

King Herod had rebuilt and expanded it.

Some of its stones were enormous, many tons each.

Its white stone and gold shone in the sun.

The disciples were impressed.

Cross References

Matthew 24:1

> As Jesus left the temple and was walking away, His followers came to show Him the temple buildings.

Luke 21:5

> Some people were talking about how beautiful the temple was, decorated with fine stones and gifts offered to God.

1 Kings 6:7

> The stones used to build the temple were cut at the quarry, so no hammer, chisel, or iron tool was heard at the building site.

Spiritual Principle

Earthly beauty can impress us, but it does not last.

Key Truth

The disciples looked at the stones; Jesus looked at the future.

II. NOT ONE STONE LEFT

Mark 13:2 — Thrown Down

“Jesus replied, “Do you see all these great buildings? Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.””

“Do you see all these great buildings?”

Jesus acknowledged their greatness.

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

A stunning prediction.

This magnificent temple would be completely destroyed.

“Every one will be thrown down.”

About forty years later, in A.D. 70, the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple.

Jesus' words came true.

Cross References

Matthew 24:2

> Jesus asked, “Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, not one stone will be left on top of another. Every one will be torn down.”

Luke 21:6

> The time is coming when all you see here will be destroyed. Not one stone will be left on another.

Micah 3:12

> Because of you, Jerusalem will be plowed like a field and become a pile of ruins, and the temple hill will be covered with bushes.

Spiritual Principle

Even the most impressive earthly things will one day pass away.

Key Truth

Only God's word and God's kingdom last forever.

III. ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Mark 13:3 — Four Disciples Ask Privately

“Later, as Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives across from the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately,”

“As Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives.”

From there they could look across the valley at the temple.

“Across from the temple.”

The temple was in full view.

“Peter, James, John, and Andrew.”

The first four disciples Jesus called.

“Asked Him privately.”

They wanted to understand.

Cross References

Mark 1:16

> As Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the lake.

Matthew 24:3

> Later, as Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, His followers came to Him privately.

Luke 21:7

> They asked Him, “Teacher, when will these things happen?”

Spiritual Principle

Bring your questions about the future to Jesus.

Key Truth

Jesus' first disciples were the first to hear His teaching about the end.

IV. WHEN WILL THESE THINGS HAPPEN?

Mark 13:4 — Their Questions

“Tell us, when will these things happen? What will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled?””

“When will these things happen?”

They wanted to know the timing.

“What will be the sign?”

They wanted to know how to recognize it.

They probably thought the destruction of the temple would mean the end of the world.

Matthew records their question as including Jesus' coming and the end of the age.

Cross References

Matthew 24:3

> Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?

Luke 21:7

> What will be the sign that these things are about to take place?

Acts 1:6

> When the apostles came together, they asked Him, “Lord, are You now going to give the kingdom back to Israel?”

Spiritual Principle

God's people have always longed to know the future.

Key Truth

Jesus answered their questions, but His main concern was how they would live.

V. WATCH OUT

Mark 13:5 — Do Not Be Deceived

“Jesus said, “Watch out that no one deceives you.”

Jesus' first words were a warning.

Not a timeline.

Not a list of dates.

A warning against being deceived.

The greatest danger was not the coming troubles.

It was being led astray.

Cross References

Matthew 24:4

> Jesus answered, “Be careful that no one fools you.”

Luke 21:8

Jesus said, “Be careful so you are not fooled.”

Ephesians 5:6

Do not let anyone fool you with empty words. God's anger comes on those who disobey Him because of such things.

Spiritual Principle

Guarding against deception is the first priority for Christ's followers.

Spiritual Warning

Curiosity about the end can make people easy targets for false teachers.

VI. MANY WILL COME IN MY NAME

Mark 13:6 — False Christs

“Many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”

“Many will come in My name.”

People would claim to speak for Jesus or to be the Messiah.

“Claiming, ‘I am the Christ.’”

False messiahs did appear before A.D. 70.

They have kept appearing throughout history.

“And will deceive many.”

Many would be fooled.

Cross References

Matthew 24:5

Many will come using My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and they will fool many people.

Luke 21:8

Many will come in My name, saying, “I am the One,” and “The time is near.” Do not follow them.

1 John 2:18

> Dear children, this is the last hour. You heard that the enemy of Christ is coming, and even now many such enemies have come.

Spiritual Principle

Not everyone who uses Jesus' name truly speaks for Him.

Spiritual Warning

Test every claim against the true Jesus of Scripture.

VII. WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

Mark 13:7 — The End Is Not Yet

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but don't be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is not yet.”

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.”

Conflicts would continue.

“But don't be alarmed.”

Do not panic.

Wars are not necessarily signs that the end has arrived.

“These things must happen.”

God is still in control.

“But the end is not yet.”

Jesus warned against jumping to conclusions.

Every generation has seen wars.

Many have wrongly thought the end had come.

Cross References

Matthew 24:6

> You will hear about wars and stories of wars that are coming, but do not be afraid. These things must happen, but the end is not yet.

Luke 21:9

> When you hear of wars and riots, do not be afraid. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.

Daniel 2:28

> There is a God in heaven who explains secrets, and He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the days to come.

Spiritual Principle

God remains in control even when the world is in turmoil.

Key Truth

Do not panic and do not set dates.

VIII. BIRTH PAINS

Mark 13:8 — Only the Beginning

“Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes and famines in many places. These are only the beginning of birth pains.””

“Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom.”

Wars between nations.

“There will be earthquakes and famines in many places.”

Natural disasters and hunger.

“These are only the beginning of birth pains.”

Birth pains are painful.

But they lead to new life.

The suffering of this world points toward God's new creation.

They are the beginning, not the end.

Cross References

Matthew 24:7

> Nations will fight against other nations, and kingdoms against other kingdoms. There will be famines and earthquakes in different places.

Luke 21:10

> Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Isaiah 19:2

> I will make the Egyptians fight against each other, brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.

Spiritual Principle

The suffering of this world is like birth pains leading to God's new creation.

Key Truth

Birth pains hurt, but they lead to something new.

IX. BE ON YOUR GUARD

Mark 13:9 — Before Councils and Kings

““Be on your guard. You will be handed over to councils, beaten in synagogues, and brought before rulers and kings because of Me, as a testimony to them.”

“Be on your guard.”

Another call to watch.

“You will be handed over to councils, beaten in synagogues.”

Followers of Jesus would face persecution.

The book of Acts records this happening.

“And brought before rulers and kings because of Me.”

Paul stood before governors and kings.

“As a testimony to them.”

Even persecution would become an opportunity to tell about Jesus.

Cross References

Matthew 24:9

> Then you will be arrested, handed over to be hurt, and killed. All nations will hate you because you follow Me.

Luke 21:12

> But before all this happens, people will arrest you and treat you badly. They will hand you over to synagogues and prisons and bring you before kings and governors because of My name.

John 16:2

> People will put you out of their synagogues. The time is coming when those who kill you will think they are serving God.

Spiritual Principle

Persecution can become an opportunity to testify about Jesus.

Key Truth

Courtrooms became pulpits for the early believers.

X. TO ALL NATIONS

Mark 13:10 — The Gospel First

“And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.”

In the middle of warnings, Jesus gave a mission.

“The gospel must first be preached.”

The word **must** shows this is God's plan.

“To all nations.”

Every people group.

Before the end comes, the good news will go everywhere.

Persecution would not stop it.

In fact, persecution would help spread it.

This gives believers a clear task while they wait.

Cross References

Matthew 24:14

> This good news about the kingdom will be preached in all the world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 28:19

> Go to every nation and help people become My followers. Baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Romans 10:18

> Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

Spiritual Principle

The church's task until Jesus returns is to take the gospel to all nations.

Application

What part are you playing in taking the gospel to the nations?

XI. DO NOT WORRY ABOUT WHAT TO SAY

Mark 13:11 — The Holy Spirit Will Speak

“When you are arrested and brought to trial, don't worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

“When you are arrested and brought to trial.”

Not “if,” but “when.”

“Don't worry beforehand about what to say.”

Do not be anxious.

“Just say whatever is given you at the time.”

God would give them the words.

“For it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

The Spirit would speak through them.

This is not permission to skip studying God's word.

It is a promise of help in moments of persecution.

Cross References

Matthew 10:19

> When you are arrested, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given the words.

Luke 21:15

> I will give you words and wisdom that none of your enemies will be able to stand against or argue with.

Luke 12:12

> At that time the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say.

Spiritual Principle

The Holy Spirit helps believers speak when they are on trial for Christ.

Key Truth

You are never alone when you stand for Jesus.

XII. FAMILIES DIVIDED

Mark 13:12 — Brother Against Brother

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death.”

This is one of the most painful parts of persecution.

Families would turn against each other.

Following Jesus could divide even the closest relationships.

This has happened throughout history.

It still happens in many places today.

Cross References

Matthew 10:21

> Brothers will hand over their own brothers to be killed, and fathers will hand over their children.

Luke 21:16

> Even your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will turn against you and have some of you killed.

Micah 7:6

> A son will insult his father, a daughter will turn against her mother. A person's enemies will be members of his own family.

Spiritual Principle

Following Jesus may cost even close relationships.

Application

Pray for believers around the world who are rejected by their own families.

XIII. STAND FIRM TO THE END

Mark 13:13 — Hated, Yet Saved

“All men will hate you because of Me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.””

“All men will hate you because of Me.”

Followers of Jesus would be hated.

Not for doing wrong.

But because of Jesus.

“But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

Endurance is the mark of true faith.

Those who truly belong to Jesus will hold on.

God gives the strength to endure.

Cross References

Matthew 24:9

> All nations will hate you because you follow Me.

Matthew 10:22

> Everyone will hate you because of Me. But whoever keeps going until the end will be saved.

John 15:18

> When the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me before it hated you.

Spiritual Principle

True faith endures to the end.

Key Truth

The world may hate you, but Jesus will keep you.

XIV. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

Mark 13:14 — Flee to the Mountains

““When you see ‘the abomination of desolation’ spoken of by the prophet Daniel standing where it does not belong (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.”

“The abomination of desolation.”

This phrase comes from the book of Daniel.

It means something so evil and unholy that it brings ruin to a holy place.

In 167 B.C., a foreign king set up a pagan altar in the temple.

Many saw that as an early fulfillment.

“Standing where it does not belong.”

Bible students understand this in different ways.

Many connect it with the Roman armies that surrounded and destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

Luke's Gospel records Jesus saying, **“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies.”**

Others also see a future fulfillment before Jesus returns.

“Let the reader understand.”

Mark tells his readers to pay attention.

“Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains.”

Early Christian writers say believers in Jerusalem remembered this warning and fled before the city was destroyed.

Cross References

Daniel 9:27

> He will set up a horrible thing that destroys, until the end that God has decreed is poured out on the destroyer.

Daniel 11:31

> His armed forces will make the temple unholy. They will stop the daily sacrifice and set up the horrible thing that causes destruction.

Daniel 12:11

> From the time the daily sacrifice is stopped and the horrible thing that destroys is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

Spiritual Principle

God warns His people ahead of time so they can respond wisely.

Key Truth

Jesus' warnings are given in love to protect His people.

XV. DO NOT GO BACK INTO THE HOUSE

Mark 13:15 — On the Housetop

“Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house.”

Houses had flat roofs.

People often spent time on them.

Jesus said, when the moment comes, do not even go inside to grab belongings.

Flee immediately.

There would be no time to lose.

Cross References

Matthew 24:17

> Anyone on the roof must not go down to get things out of the house.

Luke 17:31

> On that day, someone on the roof should not go down to get his belongings.

Genesis 19:17

> Run for your lives! Do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley. Run to the mountains, or you will be destroyed.

Spiritual Principle

When God warns, respond immediately.

Key Truth

Possessions are not worth your life.

XVI. DO NOT RETURN FOR YOUR CLOAK

Mark 13:16 — In the Field

“Let no one in the field return to get his cloak.”

Workers in the fields often took off their outer cloaks.

Jesus said, do not even go back for it.

The danger would be so urgent.

Like Lot's family fleeing Sodom.

Looking back could be deadly.

Cross References

Matthew 24:18

Anyone in the field must not go back to get his coat.

Luke 17:31

Someone in the field should not go back for anything.

Genesis 19:26

But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Spiritual Principle

Do not let attachment to things slow your obedience.

Key Truth

Remember Lot's wife.

XVII. PREGNANT WOMEN AND NURSING MOTHERS

Mark 13:17 — How Terrible

“How terrible it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days!”

Jesus showed compassion.

He thought about those who would find it hardest to flee.

Women carrying babies.

Mothers with infants.

Jesus cared about the most vulnerable in the coming suffering.

Cross References

Matthew 24:19

How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant or nursing babies!

Luke 21:23

> How terrible it will be for women who are pregnant or have nursing babies! Great trouble will come on the land.

Luke 23:29

> The time is coming when people will say, “Blessed are the women who could not have children, and the bodies that never gave birth.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus cares deeply for the most vulnerable in times of suffering.

Key Truth

Even in warnings of judgment, Jesus' compassion shines through.

XVIII. PRAY IT IS NOT WINTER

Mark 13:18 — Pray

“Pray that this will not happen in winter.”

Winter brought cold weather and heavy rains.

Rivers flooded.

Roads became hard to travel.

Fleeing in winter would be much harder.

Jesus told them to pray.

Even in the face of coming trouble, prayer matters.

Cross References

Matthew 24:20

> Pray that you will not have to run away in winter or on a Sabbath day.

Genesis 19:17

> Run to the mountains, or you will be destroyed.

Amos 3:15

> I will tear down the winter house and the summer house.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer matters, even when trouble is coming.

Key Truth

Pray about the details of hard times.

XIX. UNEQUALED DISTRESS

Mark 13:19 — Never to Be Equaled

“For those will be days of distress unequaled from the beginning of creation until now—and never to be equaled again.”

Jesus described a time of terrible suffering.

The siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 brought horrible suffering, as the historian Josephus recorded.

Many Bible students also see these words pointing beyond that event to a final time of great tribulation before Jesus returns.

Either way, Jesus' point is clear.

Hard times will come.

But God remains in control.

Cross References

Matthew 24:21

> At that time there will be great suffering, worse than any that has happened since the world began, and nothing as bad will ever happen again.

Daniel 12:1

> There will be a time of trouble worse than any since nations began.

Joel 2:2

> It will be a dark and gloomy day. There has never been anything like it, and there will never be again.

Spiritual Principle

God's people may face great distress, but God never abandons them.

Key Truth

No suffering is beyond God's control.

XX. FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT

Mark 13:20 — The Days Shortened

“If the Lord had not shortened those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has shortened them.”

“If the Lord had not shortened those days, no one would survive.”

The suffering would be terrible.

“But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen.”

The elect means God's chosen people.

“He has shortened them.”

God sets limits on suffering.

He is merciful even in judgment.

He protects His people.

Cross References

Matthew 24:22

> If God had not made those days short, no one would survive. But because of His chosen people, those days will be shortened.

Isaiah 65:8

> The Lord says, “When there is still juice in a bunch of grapes, people say, ‘Do not destroy it; there is good in it.’ I will do the same for My servants.”

2 Peter 3:9

> The Lord is not dragging His feet about His promise. He is being patient, because He wants no one to perish. He wants everyone to turn back to Him.

Spiritual Principle

God limits suffering for the sake of His people.

Key Truth

God's mercy sets boundaries even on the darkest days.

XXI. DO NOT BELIEVE IT

Mark 13:21 — Look, Here Is the Christ!

“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, there He is!’ do not believe it.”

Jesus warned again about deception.

In times of crisis, people are especially easy to fool.

Some would claim the Messiah had come secretly.

Jesus said, do not believe it.

When He returns, everyone will know.

Cross References

Matthew 24:23

> If anyone tells you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There He is!” do not believe it.

Luke 17:23

> People will say, “Look, there He is!” or “Here He is!” Do not go running after them.

Luke 21:8

> Do not follow them.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' return will not be secret.

Spiritual Warning

Anyone who claims Jesus has returned in secret is a false teacher.

XXII. SIGNS AND WONDERS TO DECEIVE

Mark 13:22 — Even the Elect

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive—even the elect, if that were possible.”

“False messiahs and false prophets will appear.”

Deceivers would come.

“And perform signs and wonders to deceive.”

Miracles alone do not prove someone is from God.

False teachers can perform signs too.

“Even the elect, if that were possible.”

The deception would be powerful.

But God would keep His own.

Truth must be tested by God's word, not by miracles alone.

Cross References

Matthew 24:24

> False christs and false prophets will come and do great signs and wonders to fool even God's chosen people, if that were possible.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

> The coming of the man of lawlessness will be the work of Satan, with all kinds of false miracles, signs, and wonders.

Deuteronomy 13:1

> A prophet or someone who explains dreams may come and promise a sign or a miracle. Even if it happens, do not follow him if he leads you to other gods.

Spiritual Principle

Miracles alone do not prove truth; God's word does.

Spiritual Warning

Test every sign by the Scriptures.

XXIII. I HAVE TOLD YOU AHEAD OF TIME

Mark 13:23 — Be on Your Guard

“So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.””

“So be on your guard.”

Again, Jesus called them to watch.

“I have told you everything ahead of time.”

Jesus prepared them.

When these things happened, they would not be surprised.

They would remember His words.

And their faith would be strengthened.

Cross References

Matthew 24:25

> See, I have told you this before it happens.

John 14:29

> I have told you this before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe.

John 16:4

> I have told you these things now, so that when the time comes, you will remember that I warned you.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus prepares His people for what lies ahead.

Key Truth

Forewarned is forearmed.

XXIV. THE SUN DARKENED

Mark 13:24 — After That Tribulation

““But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light,”

“But in those days, after that tribulation.”

Jesus now turns to cosmic events.

“The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light.”

The prophets used this kind of language.

Sometimes it described God's judgment on nations.

It also points to the final shaking of creation when the Lord returns.

Bible students differ on whether this is mainly picture language, literal events, or both.

Either way, it shows God stepping into history in power.

Cross References

Matthew 24:29

> Right after the trouble of those days, the sun will grow dark, and the moon will not give its light.

Isaiah 13:10

> The stars and constellations will not shine. The sun will be dark when it rises, and the moon will not give light.

Joel 2:31

> The sun will become dark, and the moon will become red as blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

Spiritual Principle

God rules over all creation, and history will reach its climax at His command.

Key Truth

When God acts in final judgment, all creation will feel it.

XXV. THE HEAVENS SHAKEN

Mark 13:25 — Stars Will Fall

“the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly powers will be shaken.”

“The stars will fall from the sky.”

The things that seem most fixed and permanent will be shaken.

“And the heavenly powers will be shaken.”

Even the powers in the heavens will tremble.

Nothing will stand in the way of Christ's coming.

Everything that can be shaken will be shaken.

Only God's kingdom will remain.

Cross References

Matthew 24:29

> The stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Isaiah 34:4

> The sky will be rolled up like a scroll, and all the stars will fall like dead leaves from a vine.

Haggai 2:6

> The Lord says, “In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land.”

Spiritual Principle

Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, but God's kingdom will stand.

Key Truth

Build your life on what cannot be shaken.

XXVI. COMING IN THE CLOUDS

Mark 13:26 — Great Power and Glory

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

“Then they will see.”

Everyone will see.

This will not be a secret.

“The Son of Man coming in the clouds.”

Jesus quoted Daniel 7.

The Son of Man comes with the clouds to receive everlasting authority.

“With great power and glory.”

The One who was humbled will come in majesty.

The One who was rejected will be revealed as King.

This is the great hope of every believer.

Cross References

Daniel 7:13

> I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient One and was led into His presence.

Matthew 24:30

> Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. All the peoples of the earth will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds with power and great glory.

Revelation 1:7

> Watch! He is coming in the clouds, and everyone will see Him, even the people who drove the nails into Him.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will return visibly in power and glory.

Key Truth

The suffering Servant will return as the glorious King.

XXVII. GATHERING HIS CHOSEN ONES

Mark 13:27 — From the Four Winds

“And He will send His angels to gather His chosen ones from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.””

“He will send His angels.”

Angels will serve Him.

“To gather His chosen ones.”

Jesus will gather His people.

“From the four winds.”

From every direction.

“From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.”

No believer will be forgotten.

Wherever they are, Jesus will bring them home.

Cross References

Matthew 24:31

> He will send His angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather His chosen people from every direction, from one end of the sky to the other.

Deuteronomy 30:4

> Even if you have been sent to the farthest land under heaven, the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

Zechariah 2:6

> The Lord says, “I scattered you to the four winds of heaven.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus will gather all His people to Himself.

Key Truth

No believer will be left behind or forgotten.

XXVIII. THE FIG TREE

Mark 13:28 — Summer Is Near

““Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become tender and sprout leaves, you know that summer is near.”

Jesus used a simple picture from nature.

In Israel, most trees stay green all year.

But the fig tree loses its leaves in winter.

When new leaves appear, everyone knows summer is coming.

Signs point to what is ahead.

Cross References

Matthew 24:32

> Learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches become green and soft and new leaves appear, you know summer is near.

Luke 21:29

> Then Jesus told them this story: “Look at the fig tree and all the other trees.”

Habakkuk 3:17

> Even if the fig tree does not bloom and there is no fruit on the vines, I will still be glad in the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

God gives signs so His people can be ready.

Key Truth

Read the signs, but trust the Lord.

XXIX. RIGHT AT THE DOOR

Mark 13:29 — He Is Near

“In the same way, when you see these things happening, you know that He is near, right at the door.”

“When you see these things happening.”

The signs Jesus described.

“You know that He is near, right at the door.”

Some translations say **“it is near.”**

Either way, the time is close.

The disciples should live with expectation.

Cross References

Matthew 24:33

> In the same way, when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time is near, right at the door.

James 5:9

> Brothers and sisters, do not complain against each other, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door.

Luke 21:31

> In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that God's kingdom is near.

Spiritual Principle

Believers should live as if the Lord could come at any time.

Key Truth

The Judge is standing at the door.

XXX. THIS GENERATION

Mark 13:30 — All These Things

“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.”

This is one of the most discussed verses in Mark.

What did Jesus mean by **“this generation”**?

Bible students give several answers.

Many believe it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, which happened within about forty years.

Some believe “generation” here means the kind of people, unbelieving humanity, which will remain until the end.

Others believe it means the generation that sees the final signs will also see Jesus return.

Many hold that both A.D. 70 and the final return are in view, with the first a preview of the second.

Whatever view one takes, Jesus' words are trustworthy.

Cross References

Matthew 24:34

> I tell you the truth, all these things will happen while some of the people now living are still alive.

Luke 21:32

> I tell you the truth, all these things will happen before this generation is gone.

Matthew 16:28

> Some people standing here will see the Son of Man coming with His kingdom before they die.

Spiritual Principle

God's prophetic word will be fulfilled exactly as He intends.

Key Truth

Where faithful believers differ, we hold firmly to what is clear: Jesus will return.

XXXI. MY WORDS WILL NEVER PASS AWAY

Mark 13:31 — Heaven and Earth Will Pass Away

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.””

“Heaven and earth will pass away.”

The temple would fall.

The sun and stars would be shaken.

Even heaven and earth would pass away.

“But My words will never pass away.”

Jesus' words are more lasting than the universe.

This is an amazing claim.

Only God's word lasts forever.

Jesus was saying His words are God's words.

Cross References

Matthew 24:35

> Heaven and earth will be destroyed, but My words will remain forever.

Luke 21:33

> The earth and sky will be destroyed, but My words will never be destroyed.

Isaiah 40:8

> Grass turns brown and flowers wilt, but what our God says stands forever.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' words are more lasting than heaven and earth.

Application

Are you building your life on the words of Jesus?

XXXII. NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY

Mark 13:32 — Only the Father

““But about that day or hour no one knows—not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

“But about that day or hour no one knows.”

No one knows when Jesus will return.

Not religious teachers.

Not prophecy experts.

“Not even the angels in heaven.”

“Nor the Son.”

This is surprising.

While on earth, Jesus willingly limited His own knowledge as part of becoming human and serving the Father.

“But only the Father.”

This truth should end all date-setting.

Anyone who claims to know the date is wrong.

Cross References

Matthew 24:36

> No one knows when that day or time will be, not the angels in heaven, not even the Son. Only the Father knows.

Acts 1:7

> Jesus answered, “It is not your business to know the times or dates. The Father alone has the right to set them.”

Zechariah 14:7

It will be a day known only to the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

The time of Jesus' return belongs to the Father alone.

Spiritual Warning

Do not trust anyone who claims to know the date of Christ's return.

XXXIII. BE ON GUARD! STAY ALERT!

Mark 13:33 — You Do Not Know When

“Be on guard! Stay alert! You don't know when that time will come.”

“Be on guard! Stay alert!”

Two urgent commands.

“You don't know when that time will come.”

Since we do not know when, we must always be ready.

The point of prophecy is not to calculate.

It is to prepare.

Cross References

Matthew 24:42

Stay on the lookout, because you cannot know which day your Lord is coming.

Luke 21:36

Be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to escape all these things and to stand before the Son of Man.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

So we should not be like others who are sleeping. We should be awake and have self-control.

Spiritual Principle

Since we do not know when, we must always be ready.

Application

If Jesus returned today, would you be ready?

XXXIV. A MAN GOING AWAY

Mark 13:34 — Each with an Assigned Task

“It is like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the gatekeeper to keep watch.”

“It is like a man going away.”

Jesus told a short parable.

“He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge.”

Jesus would leave, and His followers would be in charge.

“Each with their assigned task.”

Every believer has work to do.

“And tells the gatekeeper to keep watch.”

Waiting for Jesus does not mean doing nothing.

It means being faithful in the work He gave us.

Cross References

Matthew 25:14

> The kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a trip. He called his servants and gave them his property to take care of.

Luke 19:13

> He called ten of his servants, gave each a coin, and said, “Do business with this until I come back.”

Matthew 24:45

> Who is the faithful and wise servant the master has put in charge of his household?

Spiritual Principle

Watching for Jesus means working faithfully while we wait.

Application

What task has Jesus given you while you wait for Him?

XXXV. KEEP WATCH

Mark 13:35 — Evening, Midnight, Rooster's Crow, Dawn

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know when the master of the house will return—whether in the evening, at midnight, at the rooster's crow, or at dawn.”

“Therefore keep watch.”

Stay awake.

“You do not know when the master of the house will return.”

“Whether in the evening, at midnight, at the rooster's crow, or at dawn.”

These were the four night watches in Roman time.

Interestingly, these same times appear in the next chapters.

Evening: the Last Supper.

Midnight: Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane.

Rooster's crow: Peter's denial.

Dawn: Jesus handed over to Pilate.

The disciples would fail to watch in those very hours.

Cross References

Matthew 24:42

> Keep your eyes open, since the day of your Lord's coming is unknown to you.

Luke 12:38

> The master might come at midnight or later. But those servants will be happy if he finds them ready.

1 Thessalonians 5:2

> You already know that the Lord's day will arrive without warning, the way a burglar shows up in the night.

Spiritual Principle

Believers must stay spiritually alert at all times.

Key Truth

The hours Jesus named were the hours His disciples would soon fail.

XXXVI. DO NOT BE FOUND SLEEPING

Mark 13:36 — If He Comes Suddenly

“If He comes suddenly, do not let Him find you sleeping.”

“If He comes suddenly.”

His return will be unexpected.

“Do not let Him find you sleeping.”

Spiritual sleep means being careless, distracted, or unfaithful.

In the next chapter, the disciples would fall asleep in Gethsemane.

Jesus calls us to stay awake spiritually.

Cross References

Matthew 24:44

> So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at a time you do not expect.

Luke 12:40

> You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at a time you do not expect Him.

Revelation 16:15

> Listen! I will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Happy is the person who stays awake and keeps his clothes ready, so he will not be caught naked and embarrassed.

Spiritual Principle

Do not let spiritual carelessness catch you unprepared.

Spiritual Warning

Spiritual sleep is dangerous because it does not feel dangerous.

XXXVII. WATCH!

Mark 13:37 — To Everyone

“What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!””

“What I say to you.”

Jesus was speaking to four disciples.

“I say to everyone.”

But His words are for every believer in every generation.

“Watch!”

The final word of the chapter.

The summary of everything Jesus taught here.

Stay alert.

Stay faithful.

Stay ready.

Cross References

Matthew 25:13

> So watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Luke 21:36

> Always be alert and pray.

1 Corinthians 16:13

> Stay awake. Hold on tight to your faith. Have courage and be strong.

Spiritual Principle

Every believer is called to live watchfully, ready for Jesus' return.

Key Truth

The last word of Jesus' great teaching on the future is “Watch!”

XXXVIII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MARK 13

1. Earthly Glory Fades

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

Principle:

Even the grand temple would not last; only God's word endures.

2. Spiritual Deception Is Real

“Watch out that no one deceives you.”

Principle:

Many false messiahs will rise; believers must cling to Christ.

3. Persecution Is Part of the Mission

“It is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

Principle:

Followers of Jesus will face trials, but the Spirit will speak through them.

4. The Gospel Must Go Global

“The gospel must first be preached to all nations.”

Principle:

Before the end, the message of Christ will reach all nations.

5. The Tribulation Will Be Severe

“For the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has shortened them.”

Principle:

Yet God shortens the days for the sake of His chosen ones.

6. Christ's Return Will Be Unmistakable

“They will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

Principle:

Unlike false prophets, His coming will be cosmic, glorious, and visible to all.

7. Always Be Watchful

“What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!”

Principle:

Since no one knows the hour, every believer must live ready for His return.

XXXIX. HOW CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND MARK 13

Faithful Bible students read this chapter in different ways.

View 1: Mostly Fulfilled in A.D. 70

- Most of the chapter describes the Roman destruction of Jerusalem.
- “This generation” means the people alive in Jesus' day.
- Verses about the Son of Man coming are often seen as picture language for God's judgment, or as pointing to His final return.

View 2: Mostly Future

- Most of the chapter describes events just before Jesus returns.
- The abomination and great tribulation are still to come.

- “This generation” means the generation that sees these final signs.

View 3: Both Near and Far

- Jesus speaks of A.D. 70 and the end of the age together.
- The destruction of Jerusalem is a preview of the final judgment.
- Some prophecies have more than one fulfillment.

What All Agree On

- Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple, and it happened.
- False teachers and persecution will come.
- The gospel must go to all nations.
- Jesus will return in power and glory.
- No one knows the day or hour.
- Every believer must watch and be ready.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Hold your views on prophecy humbly, but hold your hope in Christ's return firmly.

XL. FIVE WARNINGS FOR THE WAITING CHURCH

Mark 13 gives clear warnings for believers.

1. Do Not Be Deceived

“Watch out that no one deceives you.”

2. Do Not Be Alarmed

“Don't be alarmed.”

3. Do Not Worry About What to Say

“Don't worry beforehand about what to say.”

4. Do Not Believe False Claims

“Do not believe it.”

5. Do Not Be Found Sleeping

“Do not let Him find you sleeping.”

Key Truth

Jesus' teaching about the future is meant to make us faithful, not fearful.

XLI. HOW TO WATCH

Jesus' call to watch is practical.

Watch Your Beliefs

Test every teaching by God's word.

Watch Your Faithfulness

Keep doing the work Jesus gave you.

Watch Your Witness

Keep sharing the gospel with all nations.

Watch Your Prayers

Stay close to God in prayer.

Watch Your Heart

Do not grow spiritually sleepy or careless.

Watch with Hope

Look forward to His coming with joy, not fear.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Watching for Jesus means living faithfully today.

XLII. WHAT MARK 13 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Knows the Future

“Not one stone here will be left on another.”

He Warns in Love

“I have told you everything ahead of time.”

He Sends the Spirit to Help

“It is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

He Protects His People

“For the sake of the elect… He has shortened them.”

He Will Come in Glory

“Coming in the clouds with great power and glory.”

He Will Gather His People

“He will send His angels to gather His chosen ones.”

His Words Last Forever

“My words will never pass away.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who knows the future holds His people safely through it.

XLIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What did Jesus predict about the temple?

That not one stone would be left on another.

Question 2

When was the temple destroyed?

In A.D. 70, by the Roman army.

Question 3

What was Jesus' first warning?

“Watch out that no one deceives you.”

Question 4

Why did Jesus say not to be alarmed by wars?

Because these things must happen, but the end is not yet.

Question 5

What are “birth pains”?

Sufferings that point toward the coming of God's new creation.

Question 6

What must happen before the end?

The gospel must be preached to all nations.

Question 7

What did Jesus promise those on trial for His name?

That the Holy Spirit would give them the words to say.

Question 8

What is the abomination of desolation?

Something evil set up in a holy place; many connect it with A.D. 70, and some also see a future fulfillment.

Question 9

How will Jesus' return be different from false claims?

It will be visible to all, in great power and glory.

Question 10

What does “this generation” mean?

Christians understand it in different ways, but all agree Jesus' words are trustworthy.

Question 11

Who knows the day or hour of Jesus' return?

Only the Father.

Question 12

What should Mark 13 change about the way Christians live today?

Mark 13 should cause believers to live:

- Building on what lasts, not on what fades.
- Testing every teaching by Scripture.
- Staying calm in troubled times.
- Standing firm in persecution.
- Taking the gospel to all nations.
- Refusing to set dates for Christ's return.
- Working faithfully at the tasks Jesus gave them.

- Watching and ready for His coming.

XLIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Mark 13 asks several important questions.

What Am I Building My Life On?

Things that will fall, or words that will last?

Could I Be Deceived?

Do I know God's word well enough to recognize error?

How Do I Respond to Frightening News?

With panic, or with trust?

Am I Ready to Stand for Jesus?

Even if it costs me?

Am I Helping the Gospel Reach the Nations?

Through prayer, giving, or going?

Am I Faithful in My Assigned Task?

What work has Jesus given me?

Am I Spiritually Awake?

Or have I grown sleepy?

Am I Looking Forward to Jesus' Return?

With hope and joy?

XLV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Watch!”

The disciples wanted dates.

They wanted signs.

They wanted to know when.

Jesus gave them warnings and promises.

But He refused to give them a date.

“No one knows.”

Instead, He gave them one word.

“Watch!”

Not watch the skies.

Not watch the news.

Watch your heart.

Watch your faith.

Watch your work.

Like servants left in charge of a house.

Each with an assigned task.

Ready for the Master to walk through the door at any moment.

This creates a powerful principle.

The best way to prepare for the future is to be faithful today.

Principle:

Live every day as though Jesus could return today, because He could.

XLVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Mark Chapter 13 looks to the future.

It predicts the fall of the temple.

It warns of deception, wars, and persecution.

It promises the help of the Holy Spirit.

It calls the church to take the gospel to all nations.

It describes a time of great distress.

It promises that the Son of Man will come in power and glory.

And it calls every believer to watch.

Mark 13 therefore reminds us:

Never build your hope on things that will fall.

Never let anyone deceive you.

Never panic in troubled times.

Never stop sharing the gospel.

Never fall asleep spiritually.

The church does not need people who are obsessed with dates.

It needs:

Believers who know the truth.

Witnesses who stand firm.

Servants who work faithfully.

And watchers who are ready for His return.

The same Jesus still calls:

Tell people that Jesus is coming again.

Tell people that His words will never pass away.

Tell people that He will gather His people from the ends of the earth.

Tell people to be ready.

And as you live:

Do not be deceived.

Stand firm.

Spread the gospel.

Watch!

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that Jesus knows the future and holds it in His hands.

Thank You that His words will never pass away.

Thank You for warning us ahead of time.

Thank You for the Holy Spirit, who helps us when we stand for Jesus.

Thank You that You shorten the days of distress for the sake of Your people.

Thank You that Jesus will return in great power and glory.

Thank You that He will gather all His people to Himself.

Forgive us when we have built our lives on things that will not last.

Forgive us when we have been careless about false teaching.

Forgive us when we have been fearful instead of faithful.

Forgive us when we have neglected the task You gave us.

Forgive us when we have fallen asleep spiritually.

Keep us from deception.

Give us courage to stand firm.

Use us to take the gospel to all nations.

Keep us faithful in our work.

And keep us watching and ready for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“What I say to you, I say to everyone: Watch!”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” — Mark 13:26

Central Truth

Earthly things will pass away and hard times will come, but Jesus will return in power and glory, so His followers must refuse deception, stand firm in trials, spread the gospel to all nations, and stay watchful and ready.

Mark 13 in One Sentence

Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, warns His disciples about deception, wars, persecution, and great distress, promises that the gospel will reach all nations and that the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory, and calls everyone to stay alert because no one knows the day or hour.