

STONE HARBOR

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Date: September 13th, 2009
Series: Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters
Section: Jesus on Mission in Jerusalem
Topic: The End
Message Title: Jesus' Primer on The End
Short Title: A Primer on the End
Text: Mark 13:01-37
Key Words: end, coming, tribulation, destruction, temple, warning

Transformation Card

This page provides an overview of the message and resources for individual and group study.

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Message Outline

Jesus' Primer on the End

- I. What the Events Are
- II. When they will Take Place
- III. What to Do about It

Related Scripture

1. [Matt 24](#)
2. [Lk 21:5-36](#)
3. [Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11](#)

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. From Mk 13:1-4 and Matt 24:3 what are the main events associated with the time Jesus' disciples are asking about; and from Mark 12:7 what short hand label does Jesus use to refer to these events?
2. What two questions did Jesus' disciples ask Him regarding the time Jesus indicated above?
3. How does Jesus answer the question (12:4) of when "these things" will occur, i.e., does He indicate centuries, years, months, dates, sequence...?
4. How does Jesus answer the question (12:4) of what the "sign" of when these things would be fulfilled, i.e., is His answer: simple, complex, specific, general, definitive, vague...?
5. What general actions does Jesus exhort His disciples to take (see verses 9, 14, 23, 33, 35, 37)?
6. What do we do, and not do, when Jesus hasn't revealed all we would like to know with the clarity we would like to have?
7. What should you do with Mark 13?

Memory and Meditation Verse

**"Take heed, keep on the alert;
for you do not know when
the appointed time will come.**

Mark 13:33 NASB

Jesus' Primer on "the End"

Introduction

Primer defined: 3 : Hopefully, a short, informative message on Mt 13, The Olivet Discourse, which is a teaching by Jesus to His disciples on End Times.

Walter Martin – “Pan-Tribulationist”

We are entering confusing territory. But we are not starting from scratch. We already know where we are going in God's big plan. The Scripture clearly testifies of God's existence, His creation, our fall and resultant estrangement from Him, His promise to restore intimate communion with Him through a uniquely qualified man. And we get that from the first 3 chapters of the first book of the Bible.

What is the end? Well, it is the place of peace (shalom) and rest (shabbat) into which God is restoring us as His children. *It is the end God has declared from the beginning!*

Now that was painting in very broad strokes, but let's not let the clarity of the big picture be clouded by the details. Rather, as we study the details may we come to appreciate the richness and thoughtfulness and thoroughness and the goodness of God's ultimate purpose.

As we study the controversial things that were in the future at the time of the writing of the NT we will encounter some things that are still future to us. As we speak of the future we speak of things we know only in part. So let's cut each other some slack, recognize our own partial knowledge, know that each of us carries truths and misunderstanding, as well as presuppositions that color our views. But we also know that God is in the process of teaching us and bringing us into greater understanding of Himself.

Stone Harbor is a place of pursuing truth. It is a place where ideas can be exchanged without condemnation. We will have different views on many things. I do hope you will all come around to the truth! ☺ I do know that God will use you to help me and me to help you. What I ask for is that we all pursue truth in humility, giving ear to God's voice in the pages of Scripture, depending on the Holy Spirit, letting go of ideas we find without biblical basis and holding tight to what God has made clear in the Scriptures.

Okay? Okay!

Let me read our passage for us this morning. It is Mark chapter 13.

http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/resources/author-index/a/DA_Carson/scripture/matthew#

The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25) Parts 1- 5 [5 separate sermons]

Part 1 begins with discussion on different views on this controversial passage.

Jesus' Primer on the End

I. What the Events Are

A. The Destruction of the Temple – V 2

- **Background & Precedent of God's Willingness to Let His Temple Suffer Harm**
 - Many thought that God would protect the temple from harm and that IT was central to God keeping His promises to His people. But the temple made of literal stones was to be torn down while another temple made by God was to be built. It was not the temple of God that was most important and abiding, but the God of that temple.
 - 1 Sam 4ⁱ – God's Previous Condemnation of Israel's Un-holiness. Joshua had brought the people into the land of Cannan. The tabernacle housing the ark of the covenant, the very dwelling place of God, was at Shilo. But it was not regarded according to the plan of God which He had laid out in the Sinai covenant, but fell victim to being used as magic for the good of the independent plans of man (Judges 21:25). Thus when Israel was fighting against the Philistines and things went poorly for them, the leaders of Israel thought it a good idea to bring the ark of God from the tabernacle so they could harness the power of God to help them win their battle. The plan backfired as God was not to be treated like a genie in a bottle to be rubbed at the beckoning of anyone. Israel was routed, 30,000 killed, Hophni and Phinehas the Sons of Eli among them, Eli himself at the news of the loss of the ark and the death of his sons fell back and died, Phineas' wife went into labor at all this bad news and with her dying breath named her son Ichabad, "no glory" saying, "The glory has departed from Israel for the ark of God was taken."
 - Jer 7:1-15 – God's Previous Condemnation for Israel's Temple Desecration Included God's revelation that He would destroy the temple as He had earlier destroyed Shiloh. Jeremiah spoke of God's destruction of the city of Shiloh (26:6, 9), and although there is no biblical record of destruction of Shiloh, Charles Feinberg cites archeological confirmation of its destruction in his commentary on Jeremiah p.429
 - Mark 11:1-19 – Jesus' Previous Condemnation of Temple Practicesⁱⁱ
- Hurtado sees this more broadly indicating the destruction of Jerusalem, p. 212. This could be influenced by Jeremiah's inclusion of the city with his prophetic announcements of the destruction of the temple. See Jer 26:6, 9. This could also be due to the fact that the temple was the primary and focal point of Jerusalem. Lane puts the surface area of the temple complex at "1/6 of the old city of Jerusalem." P. 451.

B. Jesus' Second Coming – From the Mat 24 parallel

1. Parousia – The second coming/advent of Christⁱⁱⁱ.

C. The End of the Age – From the Mat 24 parallel

1. "the end" – Mark 13:7, 13

D. "All These Things"

Jesus' disciples clearly saw His prediction of the destruction of the temple as indicating an even bigger event. Lane says, "What is envisioned is a judgment that will be of ultimate significance to Israel. It is assumed by the disciples that the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of its sanctuary is the prelude to consummation." P. 455

It is about all these things that Jesus speaks to in verse 5 through the end of the chapter 13. DA Carson indicates that Jesus' disciples almost certainly understood that "all these things" would take place as part of one end time event. Jesus brings added clarity to their understanding helping them see that "the end" is not compressed into a short period of time like a day, or a week or even a year. "The end" is more the purpose of what God is moving to; and if it refers to timing, it is only on His timetable, that apparently is different than ours.

II. When They will Take Place

A. What Jesus Taught:

1. Preliminary Considerations

- a. Future to the 1st Century Includes Past to the 21st Century
- b. Prophecy has near term and ultimate fulfillments
 - i. Jesus is dealing with both in this passage
- c. Timing of Events in Relation to Each Other, i.e., Sequence

2. The Disciples Ask, "When?" & Jesus Answers, "See to it that no one misleads you..." (v. 4 and 5)

- a. Jesus' Clearly Had a Different Focus than His Disciples
 - i. They valued knowing when what they thought would happen would happen
 - ii. Jesus valued them being prepared to handle what He knew would happen whenever it did happen. In front of Jesus' concerns was the danger they faced in the future:
 - v. 5 – "See to it that no one misleads you."
 - v. 9 – "But be on your guard..."
 - v. 14 – "(let the reader understand)"
 - v. 23 – "But take heed..."
 - v. 33 – "Take heed, keep on the alert..."
 - v. 35 – "Therefore, be on the alert..."
 - v. 37 – "Be on the alert!"
- Jesus disciples wanted to know when what they thought would happen would happen and Jesus wanted them to take great care because what would happen was dangerous. They were in danger of:
 - being misled into regarding someone claiming to be the Christ as the Christ, when He is in fact one of many fake Christs (5);
 - being delivered to the secular and religious authorities (9);
 - not recognizing the abomination of desolation (14 ff.) on which occasion they should flee from Judea;
 - false Christs and false prophets displaying signs and wonders for the purpose of leading them (and others) away from God; (21-23)
 - of falling into the lazy servant trap: the lazy servant is one who tries to figure out when his master is coming and plans on being up and at-um when His master comes down the road so that he will see him working away. Jesus warns here the this strategy (aside from it missing the whole point) will prove ineffective because → "no one knows" when the master will come back! (33-37)

3. About When the Temple Would Be Destroyed

- a. Jesus Prediction Revisited (v.2) -- "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."
- b. Time Markers in the Text -- Verses 5-23 speak to the time that includes the literal fulfillment of this prediction. Verse 24 referring to the hard times Jesus' disciples would have to endure when the Jerusalem temple is being destroyed, puts down a major time marker, "after that tribulation..." This marker defines the end of one event and the location in sequence of another. We have in verse 5-23 Jesus instructions related to the time up until and including the destruction of the temple. The next event Jesus speaks to, listed in sequence, is the cosmic event culminating in the "Son of Man coming in the clouds." This is the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- c. Conclusion – The **destruction of the temple Jesus** predicted and the tribulation associated with it would happen:
 - **after** His prediction of the event (verse 2) and
 - **before** the Son of Man comes in the clouds (verse 26).

We can actually cheat on this and pinpoint the destruction of the temple much more precisely because we stand after the fulfillment this event which is well attested to have taken place in 70 A.D.

- d. Difficulty – Some would like to see vv. 14-23 referring to an event still future to us^{iv}
 - Iron Sharpens Iron – Our it dulls the heck out of a perfectly good knife. The difference is in the angle. In this local church let's sharpen each other.

4. About When He Would Come Again and Bring About "the end of the age."

- a. Jesus' 2nd Coming and the End of the Age Appear Consequent (Mat 24:3)
- b. Jesus' 2nd Coming Will Follow the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (5-23)
- c. Jesus' 2nd Coming Will Follow the Preaching of the Gospel to All Nations (10)
Mat 24:14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come."
- d. Beyond When – A Bit More From Jesus on His 2nd Coming (24-27)
 - Jesus' 2nd Coming Will Be Attended by Cosmic Events (24-25)
 - At His 2nd Coming Jesus Come From a Place Described as "In the Clouds" (26a)
 - Jesus' 2nd Coming Will Be with Great Power and Glory (26b)
 - At His 2nd Coming Jesus Will "Gather Together His Elect" (27)

B. What Jesus Taught NOT – Exact Dates

What we don't see Jesus doing is:

1. Putting any dates on the calendar, or
2. Filling in a lot of details

It is almost as if He is just asking us to trust Him. ☺

ILLUS. – Like a professor who asks a young student to walk with her to class from one side of the campus to the other and help her carry some of her teaching material. "I'll be teaching poetry. We will start out with some very accessible poets writing in English about

contemporary issues; then towards the end of the semester we will be looking at some of the ancient poets from other cultures who wrote in their own languages in highly stylized forms found only in their own subcultures.” The professor’s young student would be foolish to think the reason her professor asked her to walk with her to class would be to understand that day the esoteric poetry reserved for the end of the semester. Really, the reason the professor asked the young student to walk with her was not even that she needed the help carrying her books, but simply that she wanted to enjoy her company along the road.

I’m content walking with my Professor and letting Him unfold the content of the course as we walk to class each morning. I hope you are too.

C. Implications of the Limits of Jesus Teaching for His Disciples Today

1. General Rule: Let what Jesus decided was enough, be enough!
 - a. Don’t waste your time (or mine) w/ talk about exact dates when Jesus will come again^v
 - b. Focus instead on what He clearly exhorted you to know and do

III. What To Do About It

What Jesus’ told His disciples to do about the events future to them and what we are to do now about the events future to us given their remaining uncertainties.

A. Respond to Jesus’ Imperative Warnings

We have already taken note that Jesus presented this whole teaching with the permeating tone of warning: See to it that no one misleads you, be on your guard, take heed... Jesus disciples, then and now, face dangers. The way I see it we can make two general mistakes when it comes to our approach to understanding “the end” times.

1. Hyper-Focus – Making more of our studies of the end times than we should. This would be the person who is so bent on figuring out the nuances of eschatological paradigms that they miss opportunities to love God and neighbor.
2. Ignore the Topic – Saying things like, “We’ll just see how it all pans out.” ☺

Correct Response...

B. Know All Jesus Has Said

- vv. 2 -- The temple would be destroyed – The locus of God’s dealing with man would change from the temple to... to what? We will look at that in more detail in the coming weeks.
- vv. 5-6 -- People posing as God’s Christ and His prophets will try to mislead you. You are the target of some imposters deceiving efforts! A correct balanced response to Jesus’ words in Mark 13 would be to have a plan so that you would not be misled. We will try to look at that in the coming weeks as well.
- vv. 7-8 -- When you hear of international strife and natural disasters, know that those do NOT signify the end of the ages, but rather are the typical events of a fallen world up until the time of the end. So when people say, “Oh, wars and rumors of war... it must be the end” you know that, no, it is only the “birth pangs” -- the beginning of the beginning of the end. By the way what a wonderful way of referring to a very hard time that we live in: a time of birth pangs. If we play that imagery out a bit, we find our existence in this time

before our Lord comes again likened to a pregnant mother in labor. There is pain now, but greater joy to come at the new life that we are being given to enjoy.

- vv. 9-13 –
 - Persecution awaits the disciple of Jesus in the time up until His coming again.
 - Mission is to be the focus of Jesus’ disciples: preaching the gospel (10) to all nations; saying what is given to us by the Holy Spirit when we are arrested for our faith (11)
 - Endurance/Perseverance is what we must exercise! (13)
- vv. 14-20 When you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be... flee...! Now I see this as most likely already fulfilled in the context of the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, but I hold out the possibility that this may have a near term and a distant fulfillment – as much prophecy does. Therefore, since the action Jesus calls His disciples to when they see this abomination is to flee for their very lives, I know I need to understand this more fully. I flee when I see what? What is the abomination of desolation? We will look more closely at this in the weeks ahead.
- vv. 21-23 – For the second time in this passage Jesus warns that there will be false Christs and false prophets. And these people will show signs and wonders for their diabolical purpose of leading people, even believers, astray! Jim Jones, David Koresh... That signs and wonders will be employed to deceive means that we can NOT assume just because there is a supernatural sign that the person by which that sign is done is of the Lord. More to come on that.
- vv. 24-27 – This is the 2nd Coming of Christ and we’ve already touched on this. Note that there is not action commanded in these verse. We just have here Jesus telling His disciples that He is coming again and that He is coming after the destruction of the temple. We will unpack this more fully also, but do note that following the destruction of the temple built with stones, we have the promise of Jesus coming. There are riches to be mined from this passage: the physical temple of stone susceptible to human destruction, was replaced by the spiritual Temple which can never be destroyed.
- vv. 28-31 – Jesus says that just as surely as summer follows spring when we see the things happening that He has indicated will happen before His coming, we are to take hope for He will follow to bring to completion all things. The reference to “this generation” which would not pass away till all these things take place can best be seen as a reference to the first century disciples of Jesus, even Peter, James, John and Andrew specifically mentioned in this passage, who would see the physical destruction of the temple at the hands of the Romans in 70 AD.
- v. 32 – Jesus says, "**But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.** That day, “...is not defined but was familiar to the readers who would have recognized the term from many OT prophetic contexts where it is used as a kind of technical term for the future manifestation of God^{vi}... In the OT passages it is what is called the day of the Lord that is in view, a future time when God will work wonders to rescue his people and to bring righteousness upon the earth^{vii}...” Hurtado p. 224 JMP: The righteousness that is brought is in the context of judgment.

C. Don’t Try to Figure out What Jesus Has Not Said

There is enough here to keep us busy. Let’s not try to figure out what Jesus has not said. Rather let’s just give ourselves to understanding the meaning of what He has said.

Conclusion

- 33 "Take heed, keep on the alert;
for you do not know when the appointed time will come. □
- 34 "It is like a man away on a journey, □
who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, □
also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. □
- 35 "Therefore, be on the alert— □
for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, □
whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning-- □
- 36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. □
- 37 "What I say to you I say to all, 'Be on the alert!'" □

Three times repeated exhortation to keep/be on the alert!

Be engaged in what Jesus has charged us to do.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ 1st Sam 4 -- This includes the tragic story of the Israel's defeat when Israel went to battle and brought the ark (with Eli's permission) to the battlefield and Eli's sons died amongst the 30,000 Israelite casualties, and Eli's daughter in law named her son the same day of the news of the routing, Ichabod, "no glory" for she said, "The glory has departed from Israel for the ark of God was taken."

ⁱⁱ Mark 13:2 -- Hurtado p. 212-213 – cf. Mark 11:1-19: "Jesus goes to the temple for an inspection and then pronounces it desecrated by the priestly leadership... Jesus announces the judgment of God that is to fall upon the temple. It is the desecration of the temple, condemned earlier, that explains the harsh prediction of 13:2."

ⁱⁱⁱ The belief that Jesus will return to earth. It is a well founded Biblical teaching simply introduced by the assurance given to Jesus' disciples by the angels of God as Jesus ascended into heaven. Acts 1 9And after He had said these things, (S)He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, (T)two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11They also said, "(U)Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who (V)has been taken up from you into heaven, will (W)come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

^{iv} Arguing for 14-23 as referring to the events surrounding the 70 AD destruction of the temple: v. 14 Locale of Region of "Judea" -- argues for a local event; instruction to "flee" -- argues for a geographically limited event, i.e., one you could flee from.; v. 18 The Possibility of it Happening in "the winter" -- argues for it being of relatively short duration; the Historical Fact of the Jerusalem Temple's Destruction in 70 A.D. -- argues for a near term fulfillment of this predicted event. So, part of "the end" came in 70 A.D. We should consider if this was a partial near term fulfillment still waiting an ultimate fulfillment, or whether this was indeed ultimate itself.

^v Just for fun: A non verified collection of dates set for events about which Jesus has said no one knows the dates:
<http://www.bible.ca/pre-date-setters.htm>

^{vi} "that day" see – Amos 8:3, 9, 13; 9:11; Mic 4:6; 5:10; 7:12; Zeph 1:9-10; 3:11, 16; Joel 3:18; Zech 9:16

^{vii} "the day of the Lord" – Amos 5:18-20; Isa 2:12-19; Zeph 1:7, 14-16; 2:2-3; 3:8-11