

The Olivet Discourse: **Encouragement to Wait Well**

March 27, 2022



Open: Why do you think so many of us have a fascination with prophecies about the future?

Read & Discuss: Mark 13:1-13.

1. In light of verses 1-3, what does it appear Jesus' disciples are asking about in verse 4? (*See also Matthew 24:3.*) The tone of Jesus' answer is set in His opening comment in verse 5. What does Jesus' first statement to his disciples reveal about His primary concern for them? Why would this be a concern?
2. What do verses 6-13 tell us about what followers of Christ should expect in this life? Why do we so often believe and act as if such things should *not* be a normal, expected part of life?
3. What specific instructions or encouragements are given by Jesus to His disciples in verses 5-13? Given what Jesus says His followers should expect, how is each of these appropriate? How should we continue to apply this instruction in our present context?

Read & Discuss: Mark 13:14-23.

4. As with most of this chapter, there is disagreement about whether or not these verses apply to the Fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 or to the future end times. How could these verses potentially apply to either event? Either way, how is God at work in the midst of the turmoil depicted?
5. Verse 23 tells us Jesus expects His followers to know what He's said about the future. When counseling new believers, how would you explain the role that biblical prophecy should have in their life? How would you advise them concerning prophecies that are difficult to understand?

Read & Discuss: Mark 13:24-37.

6. Many people throughout the ages have tried to make precise predictions about the return of Christ. How does being watchful (vv. 33-37) differ from trying to make precise predictions? What are some practical ways we can remain awake and alert for Jesus' return?

Apply: Looking at all of Mark 13, how would you summarize the main things Jesus wants His disciples to know and do? Where are you challenged or encouraged by what Jesus says here?

Pray: Ask God to help us wait well, eagerly serving Him as we eagerly await the return of Christ.

Mark 13:1-37

¹ And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" ² And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

³ And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"

⁵ And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. ⁷ And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

⁹ "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. ¹⁰ And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹ And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹² And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³ And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

¹⁴ "But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, ¹⁶ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁷ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ¹⁸ Pray that it may not happen in winter. ¹⁹ For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. ²⁰ And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. ²¹ And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. ²² For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. ²³ But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.

²⁴ "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸ "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³² "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵ Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—

³⁶ lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake." (ESV)

ENCOURAGEMENT TO WAIT WELL

What is Jesus talking about in The Olivet Discourse?

View 1: Jesus is talking exclusively (or nearly exclusively) about the Fall of Jerusalem in 70AD.

View 2: Jesus is talking exclusively (or nearly exclusively) about the end of this age.

View 3: Jesus is talking at times about the Fall of Jerusalem in 70AD and at times about the end of this age.

View 4: Jesus' words would have double fulfillment, with events surrounding the Fall of Jerusalem serving as a foreshadow of what would happen at the end of this age. Thus, Jesus could speak of both events together.

What did Jesus say is not a definitive sign that the end is near?

False christs and false teachings. (v. 6)

Wars and conflict. (vv. 7-8a)

Natural disasters. (v. 8b)

Persecution of believers. (vv. 9-13)

What did Jesus say is (maybe) a sign we should watch for?

The abomination of desolation where he/it ought not to be. (v. 14)

The proclamation of the Gospel to all nations. (v. 10; See also Matthew 24:14)

How does Jesus encourage us to live well as we wait?

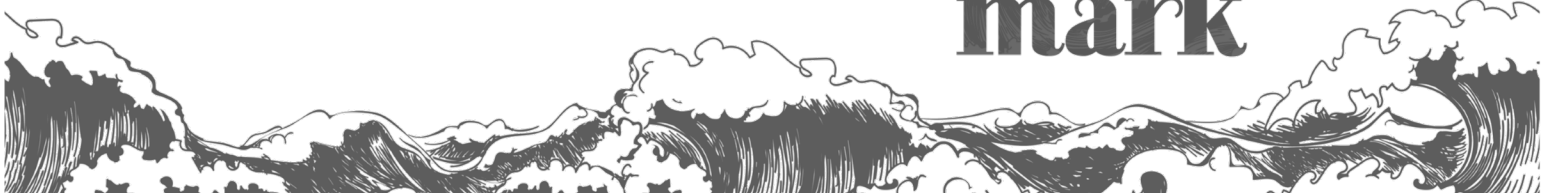
Trials *will* come. So, _____ yourself and don't be alarmed. (vv. 5-37)

The Gospel *will* advance. So, _____ to this cause and don't get distracted. (vv. 9-12)

The Holy Spirit *will* help you. So, _____ in Him and don't become anxious. (vv. 11, 20, 22, 27)

Christ *will* return. So, _____ for Him and don't grow weary. (vv. 26-37)

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