

“The **Wonder** of It All “



The **END TIMES** of Trials

Mark Chapter 13
Jesus and The Olivet Discourse

Jesus Christ
Our Highest Calling,
Our Greatest Purpose,
Our Soul's Source and Joy
And Our All-Consuming Passion.

*Dedicated to those faithful Saints in Christ,
who have served our Lord,
spread His good news,
endured horrific personal loss and pain,
laid down their own lives
and whose blood has become
the seed of the Church
and motivation for my own life's service.*

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Mk.13:1-10, March 2, 2014 – “The Beginning of the End”,

Mk.13:11-20, March 9, 2014 – “The Suffering of the Church”,

Mk.13:21-27, March 16, 2014 – “The Coming Of The Lord”,

Mk.13:28-37, March 23, 2014 – “The Fulfilling of the Promises”

EPILOGUE



INTRODUCTION

Our focus in Mark has been “*Seeing the World Through The Eyes of Christ*”. We have been attempting to observe and learn from Jesus’ interaction with those around Him and how he responded and treated others. We desire to be like Him. We realize it is an effort to imitate Christ and to treat others as Christ would treat them. We realize, that the Spirit of God, must be at work changing us, and that the life of Jesus in us, must be lived out through us. This must occur to the degree that our living like Christ, becomes less of an effort and more of a supernatural work of Christ living through us in every circumstance and relationship of life.

Mark pt. 3, is comprised of chapters 11-16 and our focus has been “Responding Rightly to The Return of Christ”. This involves the focus and reason of our living. It means we are to live with a different life focus and to be fully prepared for the return of Christ, to bring Him honor and glory and to bring others to Him prior to His return.

This brings us to Mark chapter 13, which is “The Wonder of It All”, Christ’s teaching focused on the end times of trials and its effect on the church. These end times of trials are times of growing Christian persecution, arising as a result of the proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

Historically, with the spread of the gospel, there has been an increase of Christian persecution. Where there is an increase of Christian persecution, there is, in turn, a corresponding spread of the gospel message accompanied with miraculous, supernatural power.

This series is not intended to present a doomsday perspective on the end times. It is, however, our purpose to correctly view the place of Christian persecution in the end times, to rightly respond to the promised coming of Christ Himself and perhaps to personally see what our role may be, once Christian persecution becomes increasingly prevalent in our own culture.

The Series of Mark

“Seeing the World Through The Eyes of Christ”

SubSeries of Mark pt3, chapters 11-16

“Rightly Responding To The Return of Christ”

Sub-SubSeries: Mark Chapter 13

“The Wonder of It All: The END TIMES of Trials”



“The Beginning of the End”

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG

SubSeries: “The Wonder of It All”, END TIMES, pt1

March 2, 2014

Mark 13:1-10

Mar 13:1-10 (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.

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 12, Jesus' interaction with the religious leaders, eventually led to Him alluding to the fact that He was the Son of David^[12:35] and the Messiah of God. These exchanges now lead to His discussion with His disciples which is directed toward the end time events and the return of Christ to earth.

We pick up in Mark chapter 13. Jesus shares with his disciples 3 points relating to the end times.

THE PROMISE OF TRIALS (13:1-2

First He shares important information pertaining to the promise of trials that are to come. * The END TIMES will be comprised of many different and difficult circumstances, experiences and events, both Revivals as well as Catastrophes.

Present Day Admiration (v1

Next the Disciples share a glimpse of present day admiration. Some people have a real eye for good architecture and a deep appreciation for good workmanship and craftsmanship. The temple was known for its beauty and builder's skills.

Mark 13:1 And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"

D. Thomas from the *Biblical Illustrator*, speaks here of ***Men admiring doomed things***. *Oh, the Wonder if it all!* "What manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" An outburst of admiration this. The stones were indeed beautiful. That sacred building was constructed of prodigious blocks of white marble, some of which seem to have been upwards of thirty feet long, eighteen broad, and sixteen thick. They did not view the temple in the light in which Christ viewed it. It is worthy of note that Christ, in His discourse, speaks in a very different spirit of doomed *things* to what He does of doomed *people*. When He refers to the temple He says, "As for these things" with an air of comparative indifference; but when He refers to doomed people He weeps, and says, "O Jerusalem," . [Note: Mat.23:37]

Even the most wonderful and magnificent of earthly man-made structures were temporary and doomed for destruction in the END TIMES. So when these earthly, man-made items are gone, What will be left? - nothing but the souls of men.

Jesus shares...

A Hint of The Coming Apocalypse (v2)

* The beauty of all things are passing. And the duration of all earthly things are only temporary.

Mark 13:2 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

Wars of the Jews -- At the time this was spoken, no event was more improbable than this. The temple was vast, rich, and splendid. It was the pride of the nation, and the nation was at peace. Yet in the short space of 40 years, all this was accomplished exactly. Jerusalem was taken by the Roman armies, under the command of Titus, 70 a.d.

After the city was taken, Josephus says that Titus “gave orders that they should now “demolish the whole city and temple,” except three towers, which he reserved standing. But for the rest of the wall, it was laid so completely even with the ground by those who “dug it up from the foundation,” that there was nothing left to make those believe who came there, that it had ever been inhabited.

This was all done by the direction of divine Providence. Titus was desirous of preserving the temple, and frequently sent Josephus to the Jews to induce them to surrender and save the temple and city. But the prediction of the Saviour had gone forth, and, notwithstanding the wish of the Roman general, the temple was to be destroyed. The Jews themselves first set fire to the porticoes of the temple. One of the Roman soldiers, without any command, threw a burning firebrand into the golden window, and soon the temple was in flames. Titus gave orders to extinguish the fire; but, amid the tumult, none of the orders were obeyed. The soldiers pressed to the temple, and neither fear nor entreaties, nor stripes could restrain them. Their hatred of the Jews urged them on to the work of destruction, and thus, says

Josephus, the temple was burned against the will of Caesar.
[A.Barnes, *Jewish Wars*, b.6 ch. 4, section 5-7]

While this seems fulfilled in 70ad, it is only a partial fulfillment, with the greatest fulfillment yet to come. For Christ does not simply refer to the fall of Jerusalem in 70ad, but to the END TIMES, still in our own future. There is yet to come a greater destruction, with a far greater apocalyptic era to be experienced, not only by the nation of Israel, but by the world.

The Wonder of it All, is that when the END comes, that which is of greatest and lasting value will remain. *The souls of men!*
Everything earthly or temporary will one day be destroyed.

Secondly Jesus shares...

THE BEGINNING OF THE END (13:3-8)

* The disciple didn't ask for this information. This was unexpected revelation that was distressing to them.

Mark13:3 (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?"

They asked Jesus privately, as the disciples often did when they failed to fully understand one of His teachings.

The disciples expressed...

Concerns over the End Times (v3-4)

Perhaps they were as concerned as most of us are. What does the future hold for us? What will become of my life? What will happen to the people I care about?

1) The Question (v3)

1) When will this take place? Can the events be changed? Can the destruction be avoided? How long do we have?

2) What will be the sign when these are coming? Inquiring minds want to know.

3) Matthew includes another question: Mat 24:3 "...what will be the sign of **your coming** and of the end of the age?" The Son of David was the Messiah, and was how Jesus was referred to in His triumphal entry in chapter 11, but Jesus refers to Himself as *the Son of Man*.^[Mat.24:27, 30]

Because of this question and the answer given by Jesus, there are many who believe that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70ad, not only marked the fulfillment of the temple being torn down and Jerusalem being destroyed, but also marked the fulfillment of the return of Christ. They believe Jesus returned figuratively, symbolically, allegorically or He returned spiritually. And as a result of that, many believe we are in the 1000 yr symbolic reign of Christ today – even though it has been **two** thousand years, and even though there is still sin filling the earth, at an ever increasing level.

You see, once we depart from the authority of Scripture, we can reinterpret History and Falsify Prophecy as we please. Anything goes. Everyone can come up with their own truth and everyone can do what is right in their own eyes. Once we get away from the Truth and authority of Holy Scripture, we open ourselves up to every false teaching and every lie the enemy can feed us.

2) *The Apocalypse and Signs (v4*

Mark13:4 "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"

Jesus did not give so much of a time line of end time events, but future events which will serve as indicators that the end times of trials and the return of Jesus Christ is growing nearer and nearer.

The Confusion over Warning Signs (v5-8

The disciples express their concern over the coming end times. Jesus describes the confusion over the coming warning signs of the end times.

He speaks of...

1) *The Coming Deception (v5-6)*

The greater our desire for something, the greater the danger of being deceived. Counterfeit money, fake jewelry, fools gold, advertising schemes, sales scams all play on the fact that when people want something they are more easily tricked.

2) *The Warning of the Deceivers (v5*

*** Be on the Alert**

Mar 13:5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray.

Be alert regarding things to come which will be signs pointing to the ***Beginning of the END*** TIMES and the return of Jesus Christ. There will be deceivers teaching lies. Some deceivers will themselves, be genuinely deceived. But Jesus warns..."see to it that no one leads you astray.." We must know the TRUTH in order to recognize the lies.

Be alert and don't be deceived by fake phone marketers, people trying to sell you just what you want with a deal that seems too good to be true. Be alert and don't be deceived with promises of coming peace and prosperity. These are false teachers. While there will certainly be pockets of peace and times and places of localized revivals, nevertheless the Bible says things will grow worse!

Don't get Duped!

Act 1:10-11 And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come ***in the same*** way as you saw him go into heaven."

Jesus ascended

1) physically 2) literally 3) visually 4) unmistakably

He will return just as he left... that is He will return...

1) physically 2) literally 3) visually 4) unmistakably

----DON'T BE DCECEIVED!----

There is only confusion about the return of Christ today, because people do not take the Word of God at face value. There is only confusion about the return of Christ, because it hasn't happened yet and people, when they are ignorant, with active imaginations often imagine or fabricate things. Sometimes even Christians do this. Once we get away from the Authority of God's Holy Word, we can imagine and even believe anything and people do just that.

Mat 24:27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

There is only confusion about the return of Christ, because it hasn't happened yet. When Jesus returns there will be no mistaking it. There will be no missing it and all speculation will be silenced. Because when He returns, - **He will return** just as he left... that is He will return...

1) physically 2) literally 3) visually 4) unmistakably

3) *The Message of the Deceivers (v6*

* People will be deceived. The deceived will become deceivers.

Mar 13:6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. [cp.Mat.24:3]

"He" who? Messiah – Christ – the Anointed one – Son of David^[Mat.24:5]

Expect lying and deceiving religious leaders to abound.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 speaks of counterfeit signs, lying wonders and false miracles not only spreading but being deceptive in the last days.

4) *The Coming True Signs (v7-8*

* Warning signs – Signs of the Times – *END TIMES. Times of Trials. Don't be alarmed (v7*

Mar 13:7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet.

In other words, the destruction of Jerusalem 70ad was just a sign of things yet to come.

Don't be surprised or taken off guard. Don't allow your faith to be shaken. We pray for revival. We pray for the lost, we pray for missions and for good things before Christ returns. Yet, these signs of destruction are promised, and more. These are events of necessity.

Mar 13:7 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

Violence will increase. (1) violence among nations (v8a). and (2) violence within nature itself (v8b).

Why must these things occur and why are these things necessary? All these things are under God's control and part of the eternal, end times purposes of God. These events will occur to test, purify, purge, bring to repentance, and to prepare all things for the promised return of Christ and His END TIMES ministry. This time will bring the world to cry out, "come Lord Jesus." In a unified longing.

This is prophecy and part of God's plan of purifying Israel and warning the church and judging the sinful, enemies of God.

Jesus now shares the need for...

PREPARING FOR THE WORST (13:9-10)

*Every Christian must be informed – Eyes must be open and ready – Expecting and preparing for what some would consider to be the very worst of world history. Ease, comfort, safety, lies to lull us to a false security and careless sleep, these will be the downfall of many unsuspecting Christians.

Note the words in verse 8. “These are but the beginning” *of the end*. We must prepare for the worst.

The Coming Persecution (v.9)

* In the END TIMES there will be pockets of revival, but there will be great persecution and apostasy from the faith with catastrophic apocalyptic END TIMES events which will point to the return of Jesus Christ drawing nearer and nearer.

Mar 13:9-10 (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.

This is not merely directed to the 12 apostles, but to the disciples of Jesus in general.

1) This is a Call to Be Alert and Vigilant (v9)

Do not be led astray – v.5

Do not be alarmed – v.7

Be Expectant - *Must take place* – v7

Be alert – v.9a

Be prepared – v9b – that is be prepared with the Truth.

Be a Witness - v.9c. We must be prepared to bear witness of the Truth of Christ in any situation.

Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my *witnesses* in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

2) Accused and accursed for Christ (v9)

Persecution will come for true believers. Biblically it is promised. And historically it is confirmed. Where the effective ministry of the gospel is taking place, that has become a site of Christian persecution.

Rev 1:2 [John] who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

* Persecution Historically pursues the proclamation of the gospel. One of the few places on the planet where Christian persecution is NOT presently evident is in USA. Soft on the gospel, soft on suffering. Turn up the message of the gospel and you will see an increase of the heat of Christian persecution. It is promised Biblically, and it is confirmed historically.

Good News to All Nations (v10)

Mar 13:10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.

Note v9) “...*for my sake... to bear witness...*” It seems that when the persecution is at its worst, the spread of the gospel is at its best.

Act 4:29-31 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, (30) while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” (31) And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

* With persecution comes spread of the gospel. With the spread of the gospel comes the spread and heat of Christian persecution.

Allister Begg states: “there is a connection – *and I’m not sure how that connection is to be fully understood* – but there is a connection between the level of severity of Christian persecution and the level of miracles for the name of Christ evidenced from the power of the Holy Spirit for the effective growth of the Church.

In Acts chapter 8, the death of Stephen is documented.

Act 8:1-4 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and

they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. (3) But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. (4) Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

* With persecution comes spread of the gospel. With the spread of the gospel comes the spread and heat of Christian persecution. Persecution has always been prevalent when the gospel message has been properly and powerfully proclaimed. Don't purposefully cause persecution. But the church of Jesus Christ must not be afraid of it, so as to shrink in fear from proclaiming its message, with all authority.

OH, THE WONDER OF IT ALL

Off the Page and Into My Life

- 1) I will view the peace and freedom of today as God's gift for preparing for the coming END TIMES.
- 2) I won't get taken by surprise. I will bear in mind the promise of Gods word of the coming testing and purifying and I will not be surprised, nor deceived

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG ...

1) I will tell others of the provision of God and the good news of the grace of Jesus for Salvation.

2) I will remind others of the coming of Christ and the END TIMES and what they can expect and how they can prepare, by repenting from their sin and trusting in Christ.

-----Thinking Things Through-----

- 1) Why did Jesus respond as He did to the disciple's admiration of the temple stones? What did Jesus' comments bring to light?
- 2) In light of heaven and history, what is God's chief *end times* purpose? (cp.v10)
- 3) Stephen was a good and godly man. What does this tell us about good people, obedient followers and suffering in the coming tribulation?

-----Praying Things Through -----

Dear God

I want to be alert and ready for the return of my Lord and Savior!
Help me never to be deceived, but fully prepared to be a witness
for Christ.

In Jesus Name,
Amen!



“The Suffering of the Church”

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG

SubSeries: “The Wonder of It All”, END TIMES, pt1

March 2, 2014

Mark 13:11-20

Jesus Olivet Discourse - Mark 13 ; Matthew 24 ; Acts 2:20; Joel 2 & 3; Rev 16 & 19; Daniel 9; Zechariah 15:13;

Mar 13:11-20 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.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus is asked regarding when the Times of Trials and suffering and destruction is going to take place (v4). He begins a chapter long discourse of things that will take place, together with his own

return, with a clarification of not so much When, these will occur, but what will be the signs that these events are drawing near.

As He describes these events, he addresses the disciples directly, as though everyone there would be present to experience these things as they unfold. However, its pretty safe to say that while he was addressing the 12 specifically, he was also speaking beyond the 12 to the future disciples to come, who will be alive and following Jesus in the future when these events begin to take place.

Question: What happens when the “*Faith is Passed Along*”?

Study: *What is a disciple to Learn?*

Jesus speaks of....

SUFFERING FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST & THE GOSPEL (13:9-11)

* Chapter 13 is the beginning of Jesus’ teaching regarding the End Times and Times of Trials. Heb. 1, refers to the end times being ushered in through the 1st Advent of Christ. Yet these End TiMes of Trial are in the future and begin increasing dramatically, immediately prior to the 2nd coming of Christ.

[As an introduction, Read Mark 13:8-10]

Mar 13:11 (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.

Jesus speaks of...

Being A Witness (v9)

Here, Jesus speaks of being taken to court and becoming a witness for Christ. Genuine disciples are promised to be witnesses for Christ, whether we are comfortable with that concept or not.

Mar 13:9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues you shall be beaten: and

brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a witness against them.

We remember the words of Christ, just prior to His ascension.

Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Being a Witness is for the...

Purpose of the Gospel (v10)

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG. Historically, the Spread of the gospel brought increased Christian persecution. In turn, increased persecution brought the spread of the gospel. The purpose of the gospel is to reach the souls of men for which God has pre-planned to come to faith in His Son.

Mar 13: 10 And the gospel *must*^[cp.47] first be published among all nations

It is interesting that the Middle Ages have also been referred to as the Dark Ages, stretching from the 5th century to the 15th century . It was during those Dark Ages, that it seems the darkness of mankind grew so dark and deep that one might wonder ‘was anyone truly coming to saving faith in Christ?’

The light of the gospel has historically travelled from place to place, nation to nation, continent to continent, as though being carried by the very hand of God to the next prepared location. When the message was rejected in one place and the light of the gospel seemed to be growing dim, the door of God’s grace opened wide to other regions and other people, prepared for its light.

So that when times were dark, men’s souls were dark and the fire of the gospel seemed to be growing dark. At the end of the Dark, Middle Ages, a Reformation began around 1517.

Just prior to that, Christopher Columbus had visited Americas and at the end of the 16th century, not only did the Dark ages gradually come to a close, but the New World was being opened and

populated, and a new location fertile and receptive was now open for the message of the gospel to cross the ocean and begin spreading from shore to shore.

But what now? Where now, will the gospel go if its light begins to flicker in America? It will not go out. Perhaps with nowhere else to go, the apparent growing darkness of America will not signal a new place for the gospel to go, but a time for the source of the gospel to return, i.e. Jesus Christ Himself.

It is God's purpose that the gospel message be published to all people all over the earth, and then the end will come. This is God's plan and purpose.

The Holy Spirit Message (v11

Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit Message will be given at the precise time it is needed most. This will evidence dependence on the need of the hour and for the ability of God to provide in order for disciples to ***Pass Their Faith Along***, effectively.

<p>Mar 13:11 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.</p>
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<p>Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my <u>witnesses</u> in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."</p>

It is God's job to enable and equip us for the task at hand. It is the job of every true disciple of Jesus to be an obedient mouth piece for the good news, as a witness to the world.

Jesus speaks of...

AN INCREASE OF VIOLENCE & PERSECUTION (V12-13) (cp.vs 8-10)

* We hope for peace treaties. We pray for revivals. We desire freedom and prosperity. But God's word promises otherwise.

Mar 13:12-13 (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.

Violence over Christ and the gospel (v12

* I believe this passage makes reference to the effective spread of the gospel which results in increased persecution for Christians.

When a Jew, a Catholic, or a Muslim turns from their faith to become a fully devoted believer in Jesus Christ, they are often ostracized or even worse by their own family. Rejecting any of these 3 religions is a rejection of family, culture, religion and nationality.

But when a Muslim turns from Islam to Christianity, there is often retaliation with violence for turning away from the faith to Christianity. That violence is often fatal, even toward family members. In the End Times, violence and retaliation against believers will increase and even among families.

Hated for Christ (v13

Mar 13:13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the *end* will be saved.

The end of what? The end of life. Verse 12 refers to death twice. The word used for being a witness for Christ in Acts 1:8, is “martyr”, which is a courtroom term which means to be a legal witness. But for the Church, the word martyr addresses those believers in Christ, who have been killed for their faith in Christ. In Revelation 1:9, other disciples have been executed, while John is sentenced to perpetual imprisonment.

Luk 6:22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!

Rev 2:10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

“He who endures to the end will be saved” (Mk.13:13)

Jesus speaks of....

SIGNS OF COMING TIMES OF TRIALS & TRIBULATION (v14-18)

Mar 13:14-18 (14) "But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader [Mat.24:14] 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..

Understanding (v14

* Each believer must also be a student of the Bible. The reader will understand the events taking place only if he/she knows the Scriptures well enough to understand that what is happening has been promised or prophesied hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Daniel, and is occurring according to God's eternal sovereign purposes.

Out of Syria comes up a little horn (Dan.8:9), which would extend its power to the "Glorious Land" (Judah). The little horn would battle against the "prince of the host" (the High Priest), "and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down" as he "cast down the truth to the ground" (8:11-12). Not every detail is clear, but the main points cannot be missed. This is why careful Bible students easily see Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria as this little horn. He did exactly the things predicted. In 167 BC...

The temple sacrifices were increasingly neglected. Antiochus plundered the temple and devastated Jerusalem. Hellenization proceeded by force. Circumcision and Sabbath keeping brought the death penalty. A heathen altar was built on top of God's altar whereon swine were sacrificed. The temple was not destroyed but was totally desecrated. Refusing to eat swine's flesh brought death. Refusal to worship a pagan image brought death. Orders went out to destroy all Hebrew Scriptures. Sadly, Daniel's predictions were fulfilled, the temple was defiled, and truth was cast down. (Insights Into Bible Prophecy)

The destruction of the temple, which was prophesied by Jesus in Mk.13:2, appeared to have a partial fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. Yet it was referencing a more distant future event with even greater destructive effect, which would mark the nearing of the return of Messiah to earth.

Likewise, this prophecy re: the Abomination of Desolation would have reminded readers of the past conqueror Antiochus Epiphanes, and his desecration of the temple in 167 BC, yet this too was given as a prophecy of yet future coming events, immediately preceding the return of Christ.

David Jeremiah describes Bible prophecy as often being like looking at a mountain range from the ground. All you may see is one mountain in front of you. But if you could be lifted up so you could look over the top of the mountain, you might see another mountain, and another and another after the other.

Looking at Bible prophecy from a historical perspective, might allow us to see a given prophecy partially fulfilled in more than one event and at different times in history. So the elevated view of prophecy might extend the distance, clarify understanding and reveal the ultimate fulfillment, intended to be communicated

“Let the reader Understand” (v14) - probably the words of Mark rather than of Christ, yet still inspired. But would be intended, not to imply some kind of reincarnation of previous conquerors or

possibly of some identical event, but certainly one of like destructive effect and God rejecting intent.

In other words, read the scriptures carefully, study responsibly, meditate thoroughly – don't make hasty assumptions that lead to false teachings and misplaced hope.

A Summary of the Prophecy:

- 1) These events were prophesied in Daniel 8 & 9.
- 2) they were thought to have been fulfilled in 167 BC with Antiochus Epiphanes with the desecration of Jerusalem and the temple.
- 3) Then they are re-prophesied by Jesus as still lacking fulfillment in the gospel.
- 4) Then again, it was believed to have been fulfilled at the destruction of the temple in 70AD by Titus and his Roman armies.
- 5) And yet when Jesus prophesied it, the time frame he gives is a time yet further in the future, during the Tribulation to come, and preceding the return of Christ to the earth. Some past prophecies may have a present as well as a future fulfillment.

Flee and Leave (v14-18)

Jesus even gives end time evacuation instructions. Flee and leave! Jesus gives indication of the severity of the persecution, and offers instruction on, not just where to run to, but that it is OK to run. Is it more noble to stay and die or to be obedient and flee?

The gospel isn't typically spread by dead people. The gospel has historically been spread by devout disciples, fleeing persecution, yet spreading the gospel message *as* they go and *wherever* they go, thus, **PASSING THEIR FAITH ALONG!** In fact, failing to flee could result in disobedience to the spread of the gospel.

Act 8:4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 9, Section 2: And now, since his soldiers were already quite tired with killing men, and

yet there appeared to be a vast multitude still remaining alive, Caesar gave orders that they should kill none but those that were in arms, and opposed them, but should take the rest alive. But, together with those whom they had orders to slay, they slew the aged and the infirm; but for those that were in their flourishing age, and who might be useful to them, they drove them together into the temple, and shut them up within the walls of the court of the women; but of the young men he chose out the tallest and most beautiful, and reserved them for the triumph; and as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines. Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon their theatres, by the sword and by the wild beasts; but those that were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves. Now during the[se] days, there perished, for want of food, eleven thousand; some of whom did not taste any food, through the hatred their guards bore to them; and others would not take in any when it was given them. The multitude also was so very great, that they were in want even of corn for their sustenance.

3. Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, [i.e. 1,100,000] the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army. (WarsOfTheJews)

Belonging to the family of God is never promised to be a pleasant or comfortable or easy or prosperous experience. Historically the spread of the gospel was responsible for the spread of persecution. Likewise, the spread of persecution contributed to the spread of the gospel. It was a painful but necessary component.

<p>Mar 13:7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This <i><u>must take place</u></i>,</p>
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These things **MUST** come to pass – not simply because it is the Word of God, but because it is accomplishing the purpose of God. Joel 2:28 & Acts 2:20 refer to signs of the last days. They were thought to be a present fulfillment of these prophecies, and while they were in part, they are to be more completely fulfilled and with more unmistakably destructive power in the END Times of Trials yet to come.

Jesus speaks of....

SEVERITY OF TRIALS & FAITH TESTING EVENTS

(V19-20)

* This time of coming tribulation is not to be compared with anything else in history.

Mar 13:19-20 (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.

v7) These things must take place v8) These are the beginning of the end, with an ever increasing severity—not peace – not revival – but persecution.

It will be a time of

Severe Tribulation (v19)

* This is not to be confused with any other prophecy or other time in history. It is yet to come. It will be unmistakable. It will be unprecedented and unequalled by anything else yet in human history.

It did not occur in 70AD, 1957 or any other time. It hasn't occurred yet. People in Medieval Europe thought the plagues of the Great Tribulation were being unleashed through a mysterious and horrific sickness known as Black Death.

BLACK DEATH: 1348-1350 - Spreading throughout the Mediterranean and Europe, the Black Death is estimated to

have killed 30–60% of Europe's total population.^[7] All in all, the plague reduced the world population from an estimated 450 million down to 350–375 million in the 14th century. (Wikipedia)

HOLOCAUST: Hitler was thought to have been the AntiChrist as he was responsible for the extermination of over 6,000,000 Jew. Many don't realize that between 1939-1945, the Nazis [not only] killed 6 million Jews, [but] 5 million minorities: Romanies/Gypsies, Homosexuals, Poles, POWs, Disabled people, political prisoners and Jehovah Witnesses.

All these events were thought to have been signs of the very END and the judgment of Almighty God. Yet even worse things are to come.

It will be a time of the ...

Certain Sovereign Control of God (v20)

The End Times will be a time when the certain sovereign control of God over all world events. *God is always in control.*

Mark13:7 ...”when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This **must** take place,”

Mk.13:10 – “the gospel **must** be proclaimed to all the world”

13:20 - But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, **he shortened the days...** Which will culminate in the unmistakable battle of Armagedon (Joel3:2 / Rev.16:16), the unmistakable deliverance of Israel as a Nation, the unmistakable destruction of the enemies of God and the setup of the earthly and unmistakable righteous reign of Jesus Christ for 1000 yrs.

The only reason there is confusion as to whether these things have occurred or not, or whether Jesus returned or not, or whether we are presently in the 1,000 yr reign of Christ or not, is because these things have not occurred yet. There may have been some lesser and partial fulfillments of some of the end time prophecies throughout history. But these have never been fulfilled in the fullness and in the manner in which they were given. When they do, all questions,

confusions and all misinterpretations of prophecies of the Christ will be made right.

Once these things actually occur, no one will be mistaken again. Even in the most horrific of historical events, or life experiences.

2Pet. 2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

Now this vast multitude is indeed collected out of remote places, but the entire nation was now shut up by fate as in prison, and the Roman army encompassed the city when it was crowded with inhabitants. Accordingly, the multitude of those that perished exceeded all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world; for, to speak only of what was publicly known, the Romans slew some of them, some they carried captives, and others they made a search for under ground [catacombs]; but then the ill savor of the dead bodies was most offensive to those that lighted upon them, insomuch that some were obliged to get away immediately, while others were so greedy of gain, that they would go in among the dead bodies that lay on heaps, and tread upon them; for a great deal of treasure was found in these caverns, and the hope of gain made every way of getting it to be esteemed lawful.

Many also of those that had been put in prison by the tyrants were now brought out; for they did not leave off their barbarous cruelty at the very last: yet did God avenge himself upon them both, in a manner agreeable to justice. As for John, he wanted food, together with his brethren, in these caverns, and begged that the Romans would now give him their right hand for his security, which he had often proudly rejected before; but for Simon, he struggled hard with the distress he was in, untill he was forced to surrender himself, as we shall relate hereafter; so he was reserved for the triumph, and to be then slain; as was John condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

And now the Romans set fire to the extreme parts of the city,

and burnt them down, and entirely demolished its walls. (*Wars of the Jews, book 6, chapter 4*)

“The blood of the martyrs, become the seed of the church.”

This has nothing to say re: the rapture of the church or its place for the church in Biblical prophecy. But it does promise that true believers and devout followers of Christ will suffer for Christ and will be part of the tribulation and will be part of the future promises of God in the END TIMES of trials.

OH, THE WONDER OF IT ALL!

The promises for The END TIMES of Trials...

ObeY: *What is a disciple to do?*

1) God is in control. These things must take place (Mk.13:7). Suffering for Christ may well be an indication of obedience and God’s blessings. *Suffering does not mean defeat!*

2) Gods purpose must be accomplished. The gospel must go forth (Mk.13:10) No matter how dark and bleak and hopeless circumstances may seem, God is in control and is at work, faithfully accomplishing His eternal Kingdom purposes.

If it takes persecution to spread the gospel, then persecution will come. Let us be obedient messengers.

3) God’s people will be suffer in the END TIMES of Trials.

Yet, the end is determined by God (Mk.13:7) and the suffering is regulated by God. (Mk.13:20

“ the Lord will cut those days short”. God’s grace has always been and always will be sufficient for every challenge.

4) Those who endure to the end will be saved (Mk.13:13)

Death is not defeat nor is it the end. For the true believer in Christ, death is the final triumph. God always causes us to triumph in Christ.

<p>1Cor. 15:55-57 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin</p>

is the law. (57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*"The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church."
Tertullian, (early church father of the 2nd century)*

5) In Times of Trials God will give us what to say at the time to say it. (Mk.13:11)

Christians will be placed on trial and will experience trials for the sake of the gospel and the purposes of God. It will not be you that speaks but the Holy Spirit of God will be speaking through you, as He did with Peter, as He did with John, and as He has with an innumerable multitude of other un-named martyrs throughout church history. These have lived and sacrificed and suffered and bled and died for Christ – most unrecorded in human history, but all taken note of and well documented in Heaven's Lamb's book of life.

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG ... I WILL TELL

- 1) I will tell others of history's martyrs for Christ and the promise of God's word that more are on the way.
- 2) I will tell others of my own preparedness to step into eternity and my assurance of my eternal home with Christ.

-----Thinking Things Through-----

- 1) Why will Christian's suffer in the end times? What has historically caused Christian persecution to increase?
- 2) What historically has the spread of Christian persecution accomplished?
- 3) The promise that *"these things must take place"*, indicates what?? (Mk13:7)

-----Praying Things Through -----

Dear God,

I am not looking forward to suffering, but I do trust you to be with me when that time comes. Please help me to suffer for your glory.

In Jesus' name,
Amen!



“The Coming of the Lord”

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG

SubSeries: “**The Wonder of It All**”, END TIMES, pt3

March 16, 2014

Mark 13:21-27

[Read Mark.13:19-27]

Mar 13:21-27 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.

Study: *What is a Disciple to Learn*

INTRODUCTION

Question: What comes to your mind when you think of the Return of Christ? Do you think of good or bad things? Are you encouraged or afraid at the thought of the coming of the Lord? Why?

In Mark chapter 13, Jesus' teaching on the END TIMES of Trials, is often referred to as *The Olivet Discourse*. It gets its name from the location from which Jesus did the teaching.

Mar 13:3 And as he sat on the ***Mount of Olives*** opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

At Christ's ascension, 2 angels appeared...

Act 1:11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come ***in the same way*** as you saw him go into heaven."

We know that Jesus ascended: 1) physically, 2) literally, 3) visually, 4) unmistakably, but what about *Geographically*?

The very next verse states...

Act 1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem ***from the mount called Olivet***, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

Jesus ascended: 1) physically, 2) literally, 3) visually, 4) unmistakably and 5) Geographically - ***Mt Olives***

So shall he return in the same way: 1) physically, 2) literally, 3) visually, 4) unmistakably and 5) Geographically - ***Mt Olives***
___ Is there anything else to back that up in the Bible? Can we find Scripture to help us interpret this idea from Scripture?

Zec 14:3-4 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. (4) On that day his feet shall stand on the ***Mount of Olives*** that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the ***Mount of Olives*** shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley...

So Jesus taught of the End Times from the Mt of Olives, the very place where he eventually ascended, and the very place He will return to at the END of the END TIMES.

Jesus teaches regarding His own return to earth.

Mark 13:21 - Jesus states that

FALSE CHRISTS WILL ARISE (V.21 [compare Mk.13:6]

For the true believer and the responsible Bible student, there should be no excuse for being deceived regarding the return of Christ.

Mar 13:21 And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it [cp.v6- 1st warning]

In v.6 the first warning was regarding false Christ's and wide spread deception. The only reason there is presently confusion over the return of Christ and/or the end times is because it has not occurred yet. Once Christ returns all questions will be answered and all arguments will be silenced. It will be unmistakable who the true Christ, Son of God, King of Kings and Lord of lords really is.

What People Say (v21)

As the End Times draw nearer there will be an increase of Christ sightings. People will claim to have seen Christ or to *be* Christ. False Christ's have appeared around the world and throughout history. But these will increase. Believability will increase. People are often deceived by others and often by...

1) Reputation: One way people will be deceived is when trusted or believable people teach error and make false claims pertaining to the future or who they are. Someone of notable reputation and popularity carries influence, especially through the media.

2) Position: When people who hold places of authority or religious leaders who hold celebrity status are mistaken or deceived then others are more easily deceived. Media today, gives us many, many celebrities in the area of religious leaders. We have TV church, radio pastors, authors who publish best-seller books and who wield great influence due to their position as America's religious leader. There is much influence through media. Much deception will come through those whom we have believed to be people of good reputation and have held places of honorable position.

Deceived People

Psychologist have a saying pertaining to people who have been hurt and how they tend to hurt others. "Hurt people, hurt people."

The Bible teaches that ***deceived people, deceive people***. During the End Times, some people will be genuinely deceived. Their lack of understanding of God's word (v14 –“*let the reader understand*”), and their propensity of teaching error, will lead many astray. Many are passing along what they were taught and *not* what they actually learned from Holy Scripture. Many fail to properly study and accurately understand the Bible for themselves.

2Tim. 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

There is no excuse for not studying, nor is there any substitute for *personally* studying Scripture on our own. In James 3:1, we are warned that “*teachers will receive the stricter judgment.*” Some people will unintentionally deceive others, because they themselves, are deceived.

Jesus speaks of....

FALSE DECEIVERS WITH DARK POWERS (v22-23)

This speaks of signs and wonders and those captivated by purposeful and intentional deception.

Mar 13:22-23 (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.

Lying Wonders (v22)

Many deceivers will have dark powers and manifest lying wonders. There will be many who will be hood winked by false religious deceivers.

There was Moses and the Egyptian Magicians. God performed several miracles through His prophet Moses. Satan performed several real yet counterfeit miracles through his false prophets and magicians in Egypt who attempted to copy the miracles of Moses.

Jesus performed many Messianic Miracles to authenticate His claims and message. He sent out His disciples with His authority and many of the same miracle working powers for the sake of unbelievers.

Deceiving the Elect (v.23)

Those who preform lying wonders, will deceive many, even possibly the very elect of God. There will be false Christs, false prophets with false miracles and dark powers to mimic or impersonate the person and power of Jesus Himself as the true Messiah.

2Thes. 2:9-10 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, (10) and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

There will be these lying wonders and counterfeit signs. There will be true, that is, not fake, but with genuine supernatural powers of darkness.

Believers should not be deceived by any of these false miracles or false miracle workers. These things are not things we put our faith in, but the Truth of God's Word. With the masses turning away from the Truth of God's word, and even some churches – miraculous and sensational abilities will easily lead many astray, because they will not know, nor fully understand the truth of the message of the Word of God, concerning the END TIMES of Trials.

Don't think that deceiving the elect is God's purpose of all this. It is to bring the world to repentance and the church to purification. But the unfortunate reality comes from the warning of Christ Himself and that is there may even be some believers who are deceived by the powers of Satan at work.

When these great, false miracles occur, it should make the hair on the back of believer's necks stand on end because it will be the dark power of Satan being evidenced through His unholy servants.

The beast, the false prophet and demons at the end times will have and will exercise, great supernatural powers, counterfeit miracles and lying wonders. Reader beware. Christian beware. Their power will be real. Their power will be supernaturally dark and the source of that dark power will be the great deceiver himself, Satan.

Those of reputation and position, will be those with the most influence to lead astray. Those who do not know the Truth of God's Holy word will be those most susceptible to be led astray. And whether they intend to or not, deceived people, deceive people.

Jesus speaks of....

REMINDERS OF PROMISES FULFILLED (v.24-25)

Mar 13:24 (24) "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,

("let the reader understand" – Mk.13:14)

Signs in the Heavens (v24)

Here Jesus begins to answer the question from v.14, "what will be the sign of the end?" These signs will be unmistakeable and they will be fear instilling.

Mar 13:24 (24) "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,

Near the end of the END TIMES, at the end of the Tribulation, changes in the heavens or the universe, as we perceive it. This is promised in many places in Scripture.

Joel 2:28-31 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. (29) Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. (30) "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. (31) The sun shall be turned to darkness, and

the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Here, Joel is prophesying the beginning of the New Testament Church as well as the beginning of the end of the End Times.

Joel 3:15 The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

When Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, he quotes from Joel 2, stating that the movement of the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues was not that the people were drunk or crazy but that what was being observed and experienced was the pouring out of the Spirit of God as foreseen in prophecy. [Read Acts 2:16-21]

Pentecost marked the beginning of the church^[Joel2:28-29], as well as the beginning of the end of End Times^[Joel2:29-31].

Powers will be Shaken (v.25)

The Bible promises signs in heaven, but also that the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Mar 13:25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Joel 3:16 The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

Isa 13:6-7; 10; 13 (6) Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come! **(7)** Therefore all hands will be feeble, and every human heart will melt. **(10)** For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. **(13)** Therefore I will make the heavens ***tremble***, and the earth will be ***shaken*** out of its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

Heb 12:26-29 (26) At that time his voice *shook* the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will *shake* not only the earth but also the heavens." (27) This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are *shaken*--that is, things that have been made--in order that the things that cannot be *shaken* may remain. (28) Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be *shaken*, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, (29) for our God is a consuming fire.

I do not think believers should read this and become fearful. However I do believe that true believers should read this and become very concerned and very, very sobered in their living in the present day, END TIMES. We should be sobered, and we should be motivated for our ministry for Christ until He returns.

Or as the EFCA statement puts it...

EFCA Article 9: Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Jesus now speaks of ...

THE RETURN OF CHRIST (v.26-27)

We will spend more time on this next week. Titus 2:13 reminds us that the return of Jesus Christ is to be the "blessed hope" of every true believer in Christ, as we look forward to the return of Christ with great expectancy.

Christ coming with power and Glory (v26)

Mar 13:26-27 (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.

* Mat.25 Rev.16; 19

Gathering the Elect (v27)

Christ's return will reunite the redeemed with the Redeemer.

Mar 13:26-27 (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.**

As Christians, how should we be “*rightly responding to the return of Christ*” and how should we be instructing others?

EFFCA Article 10: Christian Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Obey: *What is a Disciple to do?*

- 1) Believers will be living witnesses among lying wonders. We will be sources of Truth. We will be witnesses and messengers of Jesus to the deceived around us.
- 2) Believers will be carefully living and prayerfully sharing the good news of Christ. If we are remaining silent now, do we think we will do any differently during trials of the end times?
- 3) Believers will be helping people know Truth and to know Christ and be set free from the deception of darkness.

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG ...

1) As people who are filled with hope regarding the End Times, ***I will talk*** to others about Jesus Christ, and tell them of His coming and how they can *rightly respond to the return of Jesus*.

2) Being motivated to Godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission, ***I will tell*** others of the *Wonder of it All*, as the end times approach, there will be false prophets and false miracles and how important it is for them to learn Truth from the Bible and Trust Jesus as Savior, *now*.

As true believers and devout followers, we stand ready for the moment, when Jesus Christ will return to this earth, demonstrating His unsurpassed power and displaying His unmistakable Glory.

Amen!

-----Thinking Things Through-----

1) When Jesus was on the earth, where did He teach these end times lessons? When Jesus returns, where will He come geographically? What will happen to the earth?

2) Who will be the focus of many false teachers in the end times? What will be the reasons that these false influences are so effective and believable?

3) What events or religious activities will be a very convincing, so as to deceive many in the end times? Do I believe in the real, present day, effective power of spiritual darkness and satanic deception?

4) When Peter preached at Pentecost, what other passage of Scripture did he reference as being a prophecy of what was presently taking place?

5) When Christ returns, will it be joyful, or fearful? Why? In Titus 2:13, how is the term given which applies to the Christian's view of the return of Christ?

6) In Titus 2:14, how should Christians rightly respond to the return of Christ?

-----Praying Things Through -----

Dear Lord Jesus,

I love you and I praise you. I thank you for coming to live and die to shed your blood to pay for my sins. I trust fully in You alone for my forgiveness.

I long for your return. I look forward to seeing you face to face. I rejoice to think of being eternally in your literal presence.

I want to be ready, living fully for you until you return.

Even so, Come Lord Jesus!

Amen!



“The Fulfilling of the Promises”

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG

Mark Series: “*Seeing the World Through The Eyes of Christ*”

SubSeries Mark pt3, Chs. 11-13: “*Rightly Responding To The Return of Christ*”.

SubSeries: Mark ch.13: “**The Wonder of It All**”: The END

TIMES or Trials, pt.4

March 23, 2014

Mark 13:28-37

Theme: Return of Christ, Heaven and earth pass away, Watch and pray.

Mar 13:28-37 "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."

I'd like to begin by reading a familiar passage and encouraging promise from Scripture.

Isa 55:9-11 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (10) "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, (11) **so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.**

Our Main Thought for today's lesson is this: The Promises contained in the Truth of God's Word, are more certain and eternal than the present creation we see with our own eyes. That is, that which we cannot see, is more real and more eternal, than that which we can see.

INTRODUCTION

When Paul writes regarding the return of Christ, he states "*I would not have you be ignorant, brethren..*" (1 Thess. 4:13) Meaning, he does not want his readers to be uninformed or left in the dark about the coming of the LORD. And being good students of the word of God, we *can* be informed regarding the END TIMES of Trials..

Study: *What is a Disciple to learn?*

"The Fulfilling of Promises"

Lets look at some of those promises.

PROMISE # I: THE REALITY OF THINGS TO COME (Mk.13:28-29)

*This is the sign of the Fig Tree.

Mar 13:28-29 "From the fig tree^[Mk.11:13; 20] 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.

"He", being the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, the Messiah of God.

Sign of Israel / Summer (v28)

Jesus used the Fig tree in ch.11

The fig tree could be a reference to the nation of Israel.

1) when Israel blooms and comes to life as a nation.

After 1,878 years Israel becomes a nation again May 14, 1948

Israel and the 1948 War

In May 1948, Israel became an independent state after being recognized by the United Nations as a country in its own right within the Middle East. If relations in pre-war Palestine had been fraught with difficulties, these difficulties paled in insignificance after Israel became a state. Immediately on being granted its independence, Israel was attacked by a number of Arab nations. If Israel had faltered at this first hurdle, she would have ceased to exist as a state regardless of what the United Nations had decreed.

Israel was attacked on the same day it gained its independence – May 14th. The armies of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq attacked Israel. With such a combined force attacking Israel, few would have given the new country any chance of survival.

At the height of the 1948 War, Israel's army numbered 100,000. However, the Israeli Army was under one single command structure and this proved to be very important. Israeli victories came on all the war fronts. As a result of their military victory, Israel was able to expand the territory given to the state by the United Nations. However, this could only be at the expense of the Arab population that lived in these areas.
(www.historylearningsite.co.uk)

So the reference to the fig tree, could be referring to Israel becoming a nation and coming to life as promised by Old Testament prophecies. Or the fig tree could refer to a time...

2) When literal foliage begins to bear leaves, we can know that summer is near. This could be referring to an analogy of signs

of changing seasons. And just as trees beginning to turn green and bear new leaves, indicates that Summer is just around the corner, likewise, when these things Jesus speaks about begin to take place, we can be certain Jesus is standing at the gates, ready to return. This can help us know that promised events are drawing near. These are signs or warnings as indicators of things to come.

Sign of the END of the END times (v29)

Signs – “these things” – What things? END of the ET events and the nearing of the return of Christ.

Not dates. Not really a time line, but mile markers or Road signs pointing to things getting close to their promised fulfillment.

So when you see these things occurring – when the promises of God are observed being fulfilled, then be informed brethren, the Lord’s return is near! *That is the reality of Things to come.*

PROMISE # II: THE RELIABILITY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES (Mk.13:30-31)

Main Thought: The Promises contained in the Truth of God’s Word, are more certain and eternal than the present creation we see with our eyes.

The Reliable and authoritative Holy Scriptures presents 3 Promises in these next couple verses.

<p>Mar 13:30-31 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.</p>
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Promise #1: “*This*” generation (v30)

“This generation will not pass away until these END TIMES events occur.” This generation – not those to whom He is directly speaking, but those who will be alive when these signs begin to be fulfilled.

Promise #2: Heaven and Earth will Pass away

“Heaven and Earth will pass away.” The promise is that things

will not get better, but that they would begin to grow worse. Christian persecution, Human selfishness and violence, the world rejecting God and His holy Word – these things will worsen and point toward the nearness of the end of the END TIMES.

All that we see with our eyes, the earth as we know it, the heavens and universe as we see it – it all, at some END TIMES point, will pass away.

2Pet. 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

OT Promises on the Day of the Lord

Isa 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

Eze 30:3 For the day is near, the day of the LORD is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations.

Joe 2:1 Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near,

Amo 5:18 Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light,

Oba 1:15 For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations. As you have done, it shall be done to you; your deeds shall return on your own head.

Zep 1:14 The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there.

And the promise is that Heaven and Earth will pass away.

Promise #3: My Words Will Not Pass Away (v31

Main Thought: The Promises contained in the Truth of God's Word, are more certain and eternal than the present creation we see with our eyes.

1Pet. 1:22-25 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, (23) since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; (24) for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, (25) but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Isa 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The prophetic, promised, inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative, eternal, powerful Word of God will last forever. This will be an unmistakable time of the fulfilling of Gods' promises.

Promise # III: The Return of Christ & the Day of the LORD (Mk.13:32-33

Dropping back a few verses, we read...

Mar 13:26-27 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.

Mar 13:32-33 "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.

The Day of the Lord.: This refers to an unspecific time frame with a multitude of events, all culminating in a very specific time, with a very specific event, of the very literal and specific return of our Lord Jesus Christ where His shall descend upon the Mount of Olives. (Zech.14:4)

Day = era or general time frame- purpose of the Olivet Discourse

Day = literal day – no one knows

NT Promises on the Day of the Lord

1Th 5:2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief in the night.

2Th 2:2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the **day of the Lord** has come.

2Pe 3:10 But the **day of the Lord** will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

These passages together, connect the OT *Day of the LORD*, with the NT *Return of Jesus Christ* Himself.

the Secrecy of the Day (v32)

“No one knows” literally means, ***NO ONE KNOWS!*** No matter how many books they have written, no matter how long they have had their own radio program or TV show. **NO ONE KNOWS** when the *return of Christ in the day of the Lord*, will occur.

1) Angels don't know

They are not divine, nor are they privy to the mind and purposes of God, until He chooses to reveal it to them. It seems the angels have as much info as you and I do in this topic. And we may say, we are just as smart as an angel, regarding the time of the return of Christ.

2) Jesus Himself doesn't know

What does this tell us regarding, Jesus as God and His omniscience??

Phil 2:7 and 21:8 refer to Jesus emptying Himself and humbling himself – not of His deity - but refers to God the Son, laying aside certain privileges.

J. Oswald Sanders, in his writing concerning when God the Son emptied and Humbled Himself and came to take on flesh and blood, Sanders states that “*all the heavens were littered with the glories He laid aside.*”

Jesus voluntarily and obediently, emptied and humbled Himself. And ***that*** means he limited His own knowledge of certain things, agreed upon by the Holy Trinity. That time is known only by the Father.

Time known only to the Father

We must be on our guard an on high alert that we are not led astray and deceived.

Mar 13:-33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.

“Oh, The Wonder of It All” – Christian! Let each of us be **On our Guard and Awake** – Not that we will miss him. Remember, no one will miss Christ’s return. But that we not be led astray, or deceived or be found wasting life, not counting for Christ, or not ready for His coming.

Promise # IV: The Master Will Return (Mk.13:34-37

Be Sure and Be Ready. The time to be ready is NOW. The Promise is, the Master will return and it will be a surprise. There is no danger of missing the return of Christ, but there is a danger in ...

The Christian’s Lack of Readiness (v34

Mar 13:34-37 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."

There is also the promise that...

The Master will Assuredly return (v35-37)

Mar 13:33-37 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."

Awake- to what?

The time to Be Ready is NOW!

Albert Barns states; "Here is a petition to Jesus' audience, that it might be roused from its apparent stupor and inactivity..."

Isa 52:1 Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean.

Dan 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Joe 1:5 Awake, you drunkards, and weep, and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth.

Eph 5:14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

1Th 5:6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

1Th 5:10 [Jesus Christ] who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

Rev 16:15 ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays **awake**, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!")

Another commentary gives these insights (S. Martin): “Look at this solemn fact—the Church of the living God **ASLEEP!** Here are they who have been quickened from the death of sin into newness of life, and who have been called to walk with the living God, **ASLEEP – ASLEEP!** The people who are summoned to work in the field of the world, and to labor in the vineyard of the kingdom of heaven, **ASLEEP!** The only people who can reasonably be expected to be awake and wide-awake, are **ASLEEP!** - not in healthful, seasonable, necessary slumber, but **ASLEEP** in the slumber of the sluggard, or the sleep of the stupor of a drunkard, or the [state of one fallen into] a fatal swoon.’

Main Thought: The Promises contained in the Truth of God’s Word, are more certain and eternal than the present creation we see with our own eyes.

May we not be caught asleep, as one being caught in a lazy slumber, or as those coming out of a drunken stupor. May we not be found asleep, as though being dead to the world and unaware of the signs of the times, nor as though being unconcerned with the weighty matters of “***Rightly Responding to the Return of Christ***”

EFCA Article 9: Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands **constant expectancy** and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Constant Expectancy means living like this could be the day.

Obey: *What is a Disciple to do?*

To Do....

- 1) I will find ways to remind myself daily, that I must live in constant expectancy and full readiness for Christ's return.
- 2) I will consider ways that I may be living a wasted life and set my affections and attention heavenward upon Christ.^[Col.3:1-3]

PASSING THE FAITH ALONG ...

I will not remain silent, but will speak up as God gives my opportunity, to show the love of God with my life and share the messages of the gospel with my words.

-----Thinking Things Through-----

- 1) What does it mean "to be ready for the return of Christ"? What happens if I'm not ready? Is there a danger of missing the return of Christ?
- 2) What does the Bible promise about the future? Will times get consistently better or worse? Why? What part does sharing the gospel play in the growing future persecution?

-----Praying Things Through -----

God, help me to stand. Help me to be ready for your return and be found helping others to properly prepare and rightly respond to the return of Jesus.

In Jesus' name,
Amen!

-----a prayer from an old hymn-----

ALL FADED IS THE GLOWING LIGHT

Words: Thomas T. Lynch, 1855.

Music: HOLY TRINITY, Joseph Barnby, 1861

All faded is the glowing light, That once from Heaven shone,
When startled shepherds in the night, The angels came upon.

O shine again, ye angel host, And say that He is near;
Though but a simple few at most, Believe He will appear.

Ye heavens, that have been growing dark, Now also are ye dumb;
When shall the listeners say, “Hark!
They’re singing—He will come”?

Lord, come again, O come again, Come even as Thou wilt;
But not anew to suffer pain, And strive with human guilt.

O come again, Thou mighty King, Let earth Thy glory see;
And let us hear the angels sing, “He comes with victory.”



EPILOGUE*Rightly Responding to the Return of Christ*

For true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, it all comes down to this – rightly responding to the return of Christ. How we live, how we love, how we forgive and how we respond to what we know to be true about the promised coming of our Lord. When the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on earth. We cannot govern the earth, but we can govern and nurture faith in our own lives. The question is, will we, will I?

How to be Ready to be a witness.

1Peter 3:15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

SANCTIFYING CHRIST as Lord

HARBORING HOPE for all we might influence.

BEING PREPARED TO ANSWER why we have a hope like that in times like these.

BEING GENTLE AND RESPECTFUL to all, whether we agree with them or not.

We rightly respond to the return of Christ, by:
Knowing and obeying the Commands of God.

Knowing and trusting the promises from Scripture.

Repenting and Confessing Sins

Sensing the need of those around you.

Seeing the unsaved through the eyes of Christ.

Being Prepared, Living Obediently, Proclaiming Daily, Living Appropriately – making life count for Christ as we are actively and confidently **PASSING THE FAITH ALONG.**

..... ***Don't close this booklet yet!***

Don't close this booklet yet!

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior of *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; --
Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come from
God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but
have everlasting life. --*John 3:16*

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him to die
in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal
life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- *Romans 6:23*

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of Jesus
Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still
sinners, Christ died for us. ---*Romans 5:8*

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- *Rom 10:13*

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he
gave the right to become children of God, - *John 1:12*

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you are
truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your
sins and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. *He already knows.*

- also Confess Jesus as you LORD.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

We have a free booklet on:

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***May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience
and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship
of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit
in His Church and throughout our mission field***

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