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Mark 13

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Mark 13.

Topics.

- The temple will be destroyed.
- Many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Christ."
- You will hear of wars and rumours of wars.
- The Gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.
- The abomination of desolation.
- Look, here is the Christ!
- The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light.
- Birth pains of the earth bring forth the return of Christ.
- When the fig tree puts out leaves, you know summer is near.
- The Kingdom is like a man going on a journey.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter the Jews sought to arrest Jesus so they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to trap him with questions, but Jesus beautifully answered their questions and left them with no response, then told his disciple to beware of self-righteous religious leaders (the scribes) who loved to feel important in their long robes.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

MARK 13:1-2

The Temple will be Destroyed.

- **Mark 13:1-2:** And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" ²And 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."

The temple was a magnificent building, it had absolute beauty inside ornaments of gold and pictures of cherubs carved in the walls and sewn into its curtains, a building everyone would have admired, much like the architecture in Vatican City today and some of the great cathedrals that have been built throughout history, but if the heart of the priests inside all these awe-inspiring temples is corrupt it means nothing to God. At the end of the previous chapter Jesus left the temple because the self-righteous and prideful scribes were plotting to kill him. The Christian message is a spiritual message that touches the human heart, no number of man-made temples affects the heart of God no matter how glorious. This is because God's interest is in the attitude of the human heart and not buildings of bricks and mortar. If it were possible for a travel agent to offer God a trip to the most inspiring and glorious religious church building on planet earth or to a beggar lying in a dirty cutter clothed in rags but whose heart was seeking the Lord, the choice for God is a no brainer. The lowliest of humans whose heart is honouring God is priceless to the Lord, whereas the most awe-inspiring building of bricks and mortar no matter how architecturally beautifully designed is worthless (the Romans destroyed the temple in 70 A.D).

Many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Christ."

- **Mark 13:3-6:** 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?" ⁵And Jesus began to say to them "See that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.

The Mount of Olives is opposite the temple in Jerusalem, Peter and Andrew were the sons of Jona, and James and John were the sons of Zebedee and Salome. To be an apostle they had to have been with Jesus from the time of John the Baptist to the day Jesus was resurrected and witnessed the resurrection so they would be testifying from personal experience of the life of Christ and of his resurrection.

Let no-one lead you astray: it is interesting to notice when Peter, James, John and Andrew ask Jesus "When will the temple be destroyed?" The very first thing Jesus does is warn them about being deceived. It is most likely that Jesus following words:

- Many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Christ" (v6).

Does not mean they are saying they themselves are Jesus Christ, because it is hardly likely that many would be deceived by such an outlandish claim and there are no examples of this in the Bible. It is more likely that they are proclaiming (i.e., saying Jesus is the Christ, but teaching a false Gospel. An example of this would be the Galatians who after Paul had converted them to Christ and departed, Jewish religious leaders came amongst them with clever speech and oratory skills enticing them back under the law to be saved or to maintain their salvation. These false Jewish religious leaders were not denying that Jesus is the Christ, but were actually saying he is the Christ, but they were teaching that the way to salvation was by self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days, and keeping religious customs and traditions rather than by faith and grace, thus the deception was very subtle especially to the Jews who had been under the Mosaic Law for four thousand years.

You will hear of Wars and Rumours of Wars.

- **Mark 13:7-9:** And when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸For 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.

The mighty kingdom of Rome was conquering the world at the time of Peter, James, John and Andrew, the Jews suffered enormous persecution at the hands of ten different Roman Emperors and their armies. Jews and Christians were beaten, cast out of their homes, imprisoned and tortured, taken before Roman governors and in 70 AD., Rome brought Jerusalem to ruin and destroyed the temple. But the words of Christ's are not limited to this period of history only, as the remainder of the chapter shows us that all these things continue until the Lord returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. The Bible pictures the earth as a pregnant women in labour, waiting to give birth to the sons and daughters of God (the resurrection) as in a natural birth the labour pains become more rapid and

more painful as the birth gets closer, likewise natural disasters and troubles of the earth will increase as the time approaches for the earth to give birth to the children of God. When this climatic and awesome event takes place the world as we know it will be totally changed.

MARK 13:10

The Gospel must First be Proclaimed to all Nations.

- **Mark 13:10:** And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.

Before the end comes (v7) Jesus disciples will be beaten and persecuted, the temple will be destroyed, nations will rise against nations, there will be earthquakes and famines and the Gospel will be proclaimed to all nations. Jesus says the same thing in the book of Matthew.

- This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Matt. 24:14).

Paul in the following verses says:

- But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:18).
- If indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister (Col. 1:23).

Paul says, the Gospel has gone out to the ends of the world and to all creation, but that does not mean everyone embraced it. The principal taught in the Old Testament for maintaining faith was for each generation to teach the next generation. God delivered Israel from Egypt (the house of bondage) and then told the fathers to remind their children and teach them of the great miracles God used to deliver Israel from bondage and for them to teach the faith to their children and their children's children. Sadly the world has grossly failed in this principle of the fathers teaching the children in fact our global media and our schools have not only stopped teaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ they have adopted evolution as the primary teaching making God the majestic and awe-inspiring Creator of all things and source of all life almost extinct in our schools and our world. In the book of Revelation John tells us that an angel will proclaim the Gospel to every Nation:

- Then I (John) saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come (Rev. 14:6-7).

NOTICE: the focus of these verses is God's judgment on earth has come. The eternal Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a Gospel of life and death, it has two the following two aspects:

1. The power to deliver a person from the judgment of God and save them to eternal life.
2. The power to condemn the wicked to judgment and the wrath of God.

In the context of these verses this angel is bringing God's judgement upon the wicked because the wickedness of the earth has become fully ripe. The harvest is not souls being saved, but the wicked being cast out. The angel is pictured putting his sickle to the earth and harvesting out the wickedness and giving it over to the wrath of God, this period embraces the fall of Babylon (symbolising the entire world system of finance, trade and government collapsing) and the citizens of the earth worshipping the beast and its image and receiving a mark (Rev. 14:8-20).

The Abomination of Desolation.

- **Mark 13:11-14:** And when they bring you (Jews and Christians) 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. ¹²And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³And 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 it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Matthew 24:15 is a parallel passage).

During the era of the Roman Empire those that proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ were not only persecuted by the Romans but also by the Jews who did not accept Christ many suffered extremely cruel torture and death throughout the Roman period until the rise of king Constantine.

The following are seven abominations the LORD hates:

- Haughty eyes and a lying tongue.
- Hands that shed innocent blood.
- A heart that devises wicked plans.
- Feet that make haste to run to evil.
- A false witness who breathes out lies.
- One who sows discord among brothers (Proverbs 6:16-20).

The word abomination embraces everything that is offensive to God some of which are wickedness, oppressing others for ones one gain especially the poor, lies, pride, kings who do evil, perverting justice, cheating in business, stealing, breaking a promise, a covenant or treaty, adultery and worshipping other gods.

(Deut. 7:25) (Prov. 3:32) (Prov. 11:20) (Prov. 12:22) (Prov.15:9, 26) (Prov. 16:5, 12) (Prov. 17:15) (Prov. 20:10) (Prov. 28:9) (Ezek. 18:12) (Ezek. 22:11) (Malachi 2:11).

When you see the abomination of desolation (v14). The book of Daniel says, the armies of a contemptible person will appear, profane the temple and set up, the abomination that makes desolate (Dan. 11:31) (Dan. 12:11). This contemptible person will seduce with flattery and exalt himself above every god, he will prosper and enter into the glorious land, tens of thousands will fall, but they will be delivered from his hand (Dan. 11:32-33). When Daniel, in prophecy, tried to describe an abomination so abhorrent and loathsome to all moral and religious decency as to leave its abode desolate, he used the expression, the abomination of desolation. The abomination that Daniel has in focus is a person who brings everything to utter destruction, whatever the abomination of desolation is, its end result is absolute destruction.

Tribulation that has not been from the beginning of Creation.

- **Mark 13:15-20:** Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, ¹⁶and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁷And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those

days! ¹⁸Pray that it may not happen in winter. ¹⁹For 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. ²⁰And 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.

When the abomination of desolation (spoken of by the prophet Daniel) is standing in the Holy Place, it is going to trigger enormous destruction in Judea, so horrific that Jesus warns his disciples to pray that it will not take place in the freezing cold months of winter or on a Sabbath Day (because of the laws restricting what they could do) and that it will be a great time of sorrow for women who are pregnant. When the abomination of desolation is established in the temple the only escape from the terror of this time is to flee into the mountains of Judea. It will be such a destructive period of time that if it was not brought to an end the elect (the nation of Israel) would have been totally wiped out.

The abomination of desolation is far too big a topic to cover in this chapter, for further information see:

- Daniel 9:27, Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11.
- In, Commentary OT (ON WEBSITE MENU)

MARK 13:21-23

Look, here is the Christ!

- **Mark 13:21-23:** And then if anyone says to you 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. ²²False christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. ²³But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.

Signs: (semeion) in this context can refer to a miracle, token or wonder, Jesus after warning Peter, James, John and Andrew, of the horror of the abomination of desolation (v5-6) again warns them of false teachers and adds that these deceptive teachers will also do many signs and wonders in the name of the Lord.

MARK 13:24-27

The Sun will be Darkened and the Moon will not Give its Light.

- **Mark 13:24-27:** "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷And then he (Jesus) will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

The words, "After that tribulation," relates to after the abomination of desolation so after the abomination of desolation the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will be falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Some say that this event is literal while others teach that the sun, the moon and the stars falling is prophetic and poetic language that uses the sun and the moon to represent rulers' especially false religious leaders in high places of authority and influence and the stars to represent all those following these false religious teachers. Most likely both the literal and figurative are true, certainly when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords not only will every earthly ruler come under his authority, rule and government, but the earth and the climate as we know them today will be dramatically changed, the ground will abundantly produce and domestic animals will be able to play with wild ones (i.e. the lamb will lay down with the wolf) (Isaiah 11:6) (Isaiah 65:25).

Clouds: (nephele) (nephos) in Scripture when spoken of negatively represent great darkness and gloominess and figuratively represent confusion and false prophets. They are a symbol of people who lack knowledge of the truth and symbolise wrath, destruction and desolation. The Scriptures say the darkness of the clouds hides the bright light of God and God Himself, thus they are a symbol of God and his truth being hidden in confusion and false teaching. But when clouds are spoken of positively, they represent strength and when the word heaven is associated with clouds it gives the word cloud the meaning of light and truth. For more information see:

- Clouds (the symbolism of) in, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Birth pains of the earth bring forth the return of Christ: the birth pains (i.e. events) to happen prior to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, include:

- The destruction of the temple at Jerusalem.
- Followers of Christ being persecuted.
- Priests and ministers who say they are teaching in Christ name leading many astray through false teaching and signs and wonders.
- Labour pains of war, earthquakes, famines and natural disasters in various places which will increase and become more rapid as the time draws near.
- The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which leads to eternal life or judgment to wrath will be proclaimed to all nations (Mark 13:2-13).
- Then Christ will return in clouds with great power and glory and send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds (Mark 13:26-27).

The birth of the sons and daughters of God: when the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords the earth will give birth to the sons and daughters of God (the resurrection) and they will rule with Christ from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

MARK 13:28-33

When the Fig Tree puts out Leaves, you know Summer is Near.

- **Mark 13:28-33:** "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. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly, I say to you this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹Heaven 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. ³³Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.

Some teach that the lesson we are to learn from the fig tree is that the fig tree represents Israel and therefore what Jesus is saying is referring to: The 1948 Arab-Israeli war fought between the State of Israel and a military coalition of Arab states and Palestinian Arabs forces. This war is known to the Arabs as, the catastrophe and to Israel as the war of Independence or war of liberation. In the three years following this war, about 700,000 Jews immigrated to Israel. Since this was a great victory for Israel and brought about their liberation many believe this was when the fig tree (Israel blossomed).

Others teach that the fig tree blossomed during: the six-day war of 1967, also known as the June war, 1967, the Arab-Israeli war, or third Arab-Israeli war, this war was fought between by Israel and the neighbouring states of Egypt (known at the time as the United Arab Republic), Jordan and Syria. Within only six days, Israel had won a decisive land war their forces had taken control of the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria thus the reason many say this was when the fig tree (Israel blossomed). Those who believe that the blossoming of the fig tree refers to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war or the six-day war of 1967, teach that the generation who saw these events will see the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Assuming a generation is 40 years Christ should have returned in 1988, but if we take a generation to be 70 years it is possible that Christ may return in 2018. Though there maybe some truth in this it is more likely that the Lord is telling the disciples that just as everyone in the Middle East knows when the fig tree shed its leaves summer is near, so to should everyone know that when they see the signs the Lord has been talking about in this chapter (i.e. wars, extreme famines, earthquakes and natural disasters) increasing and becoming more rapid all across the world they should know that the Lord is near.

MARK 13:34-37

The Kingdom is like a man going on a Journey.

- **Mark 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. ³⁵Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or in the morning— ³⁶lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake."

The man: is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The house: is the Kingdom of God.

The servants: are all those who belong to Christ.

The doorkeeper: is, the ministers and leaders of religious affairs.

The master of the house: is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus ends this parable by saying, what I say to you (i.e. those with him) I say to all meaning to every generation. This parable is teaching, Christ walked on earth and established the Gospel, then was put to death and rose again to the right-hand side of God. This means that he has left all those who belong to him in charge of his Kingdom, each one with their own particular work to do. He especially tells those in authority and who have great influence over the people in the Kingdom to remain alert and not fall to the deceptions of this world, because no-one knows when Christ will return. The lesson that Jesus is teaching his followers (of every generation) in this parable is, to always endeavour to live a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and remain in the faith so that they will be counted as a worthy and faithful servant when their Lord does return.

A lifestyle that honours God: a lifestyle that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith includes the following two commandments of Jesus: -

1. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matt. 22:37-38).
2. You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22:39).

These are the only two commandments anyone needs to know simply because if a person loves their neighbour as themselves, they will never hurt or harm another human in anyway therefore no other commandment would ever be broken. In the book of Romans Paul states:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

This clearly shows that the spirit of the law is love because each law protects the innocent from harm and hurt. Paul in his letter to the Galatians wrote:

- The whole law is fulfilled in the words: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Galatians 5:14).

And that:

- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Gal. 5:22-23).

There is no law against love because love does no harm, James calls Jesus command to "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:28-31) the Royal law (James 2:8), this is because it means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves. Loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do

harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land. Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God" (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing" (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights" (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour. The constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus in this sermon calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. Biblically a wicked person is primarily one who deliberately and consciously denies the existence of God and does harm to other humans, in contrast to this a good person is one who worships God and the Lord Jesus Christ and does all they can do what is right what and just (i.e., fair for all). To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ. For further information on Jesus Famous Sermon see:

- Matthew 5.

In, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The following chapter does not link to the end of this chapter, but begins with Jesus teaching the crowds beside the sea, The Parable of the Sower.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
