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Date: October 4th, 2009
Series: Who Jesus Is & Why He Matters
Section: Jesus on Mission in Jerusalem
Topic: The End
Message Title: How Jesus Prepared His Disciples for the Time Until He Returns (Part 2)
Short Title: How Jesus Prepared His Disciples for a Particularly Dangerous Time
Text: Mark 13:14-23

Logical Structure of the Passage

- 1-2 Jerusalem temple is exalted as an object of wonder by Jesus' disciples, and humbled as the object of coming destruction by Jesus.
- 3-4 Jesus' disciples ask Him **WHEN** "all these things" will take place, understanding Jesus reference to the destruction of the temple to indicate a larger more complex culmination of God's plan for Israel.
- 5-23 Jesus Answer to His Disciple's Question
 - Prevailing Tone of Warning against being Deceived
 - 5-13 Troubles Jesus' Disciples Would Face
 - 14-19 Abomination of Desolation
 - 20-23 Great Suffering and Deception
 - 24-27 Coming of the Son of Man in the Clouds
 - 28-31 Timing of Jesus Coming in relation to these Events
 - 32-37 Exhortation by Jesus to His Disciples to "Be on the Alert!"

Transformation Card

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

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Short Title: A Dangerous Time
Text: Mark 13:14-23
Key Words: Abomination of Desolation, Flee, Tribulation, False Christs, False Prophets, Signs and Wonders

Message Outline

How Jesus Prepared His Disciples for a Particularly Dangerous Time

- I. He Described the Events of that Time
- II. He Told His Disciples How to Respond to those Events
- III. What Jesus would have Us Know about those Events?

Related Scripture

1. Mat 24 (esp. 15-23)
2. Luke (esp. 20-24)
3. Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 (and ctxs.)

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. What is the Abomination of Desolation?
2. Why is it difficult to answer this question?
3. What should we do when there are many different understandings of a Bible passage?
4. What did Jesus say His disciples were to do when they saw the abomination of desolation standing...?
5. How would the knowledge of God's shortening of the tribulation bring hope?
6. What is the danger Jesus warns of in 21-23; and how are Jesus disciples to safeguard against this danger?
7. How are we prepared for what lies ahead of us by Jesus instruction?

Memory and Meditation Verse

“But take heed; behold, I have told you everything in advance.”

Mark 13:23 NASB

How Jesus Prepared His Disciples for the Time Until He Returns (Part 2)

How Jesus Prepared His Disciples for a Particularly Dangerous Time

Intro

In AD 66-70 very difficult times came upon the city and people of Jerusalem. Jewish zealots revolted against Roman rule and in 66 actually won a significant victory over Rome's Twelfth Legion (Josephus, War II. Xix 2-9). But many saw the writing on the wall and knew they would not prevail against Rome and fled the city (War II. xx. 1). But in 70 AD, under the command of Titus the temple was destroyed and a good chunk of the city with it. There was great loss of life amongst those who stayed behind in Jerusalem and did not leave when they had a chance. So reads the secular history of the time we will consider today.

The passage before us today finds at the very least its significant near term fulfillment in these events in Jerusalem concluding in AD 70.

Mark 13 is Jesus' Olivet Discourse. A few weeks back we took a look at all of chapter 13 in survey form. We spent last Sunday looking at how Jesus prepares His disciples for the time until He returns noting that:

- [He Teaches Us About that Time \(preparing us with what to expect\)](#)
- [He Warns Us of Its Dangers](#)
- [He Calls Us to the Mission It Requires](#)
- [He Encourages Us to Endure Its Hardships](#)

This week we will be looking at Mark 13:14-23 and we will see that in these verses...

- **Jesus Tells His Disciples How to Manage a Particularly Dangerous Time**

Picking up on Jesus' use of "birth pangs" in verse 8, DA Carson sees Mark 13:5-23 as describing the entire inter-advental period – the time between the first and second coming of Christ – with verse 5-23 as labor pains in general and the verses before us today (esp. vv.13-19) as a particularly sharp pang.

Let's look at ...

How Jesus Prepared His Disciples for a Particularly Dangerous Time in this general period of time in which we live still, the time between the first and second advent of Christ.

How Jesus Prepared His Disciples for a Particularly Dangerous Time

Let's read the passage [13-23]

I. He Described the Events of that Time

Heads Up! There will be...

A. An “Abomination of Desolation” Standing Where It Should Not Be

1. What is the Abomination of Desolation? A Sampling of Views

- Abomination – Clark: “...in the original Hebrew refers to things unclean and revolting, and especially to objects of abhorrence connected with idols and idolatry.” p. 248
- Desolation – Clark: “...is especially applied to the wasting devastations of war.” p. 248
- Abomination of Desolation – Clark: “...the profanations connected with the devastations of heathen conquest, and points unmistakably to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus. But what particular thing or event in this destruction is here meant?” p. 248
 - a. Lane – “...the clown Phanni as high priest” p. 469
 - b. Beasley-Murray – “...what is detestable and rejected by God and causes horror and destruction among humankind.” As cited in Garland p. 495
 - c. jewishencyclopedia.com – “the transformation, by Antiochus Epiphanes, of the sacred Temple at Jerusalem into a heathen one.”
 - d. Garland – after discussing several possible meanings and their merits and weaknesses concludes, “The allusion remains inside information that the original audience of the Gospel understood, but we are left only with guesses. In my opinion, it refers to some specific first-century phenomenon related to the war against Rome when it made sense to flee Jerusalem.” p. 497.
 - e. Hurtado – says that Jesus’ disciples would have regarded the fall of Jerusalem (predicted by Jesus in v.2 and experienced in 70 A.D.) as “the abomination that causes desolation.” p. 216.
 - f. Clark – “...the eagles, which the Romans carried as standards, worshiped as idols, and hence were an abomination to the Jews.” p. 248
 - g. Dispensationalist (McCarthur, Walvoord...) would see this as speaking to an event still future to us and typically assign the identity to the Antichrist. This view has been made *popular* by Tim LeHaye’s “Left Behand” series of books, but I find it less compelling.

I was so exasperated by the plethora of views that I decided to look it up on line. Lo and behold, I found a picture of the Abomination of Desolation. Here it is now...



A "yeti" from contested footage shot in California in 1967

Admittedly, grudgingly, I realized if I were to understand what Jesus meant by His use of “Abomination of Desolation” I’d have to understand the source of His quote.

2. What is the Abomination of Desolation? A Look at the Source of Jesus' Quote

- a. Daniel 9:24-27¹ [read]
- b. Edward J Young's Wisdom
 - i. His Preface to 9:24-27

"This passage ... is one of the most difficult in all the OT, and the interpretations which have been offered are almost legion. M[ontgomery] remarks that "The history of the exegesis of the 70 Weeks is the Dismal Swamp of OT criticism." P. 191 Young goes on to say, "In order properly to approach the study of this passage, it will be necessary briefly to state the principal interpretations... A. The Traditional Messianic Interpretation. ... B. ... one which applies the passage to Antiochus Epiphanes. ... C. The Christian Church Exposition. ... D. The Parenthesis Interpretation. " P. 192-194
 - ii. His Analysis
 - Young sees the "Traditional Messianic Interpretation" as the best and describes it in brief: "It regards this passage as a prophecy of the first advent of Christ in the flesh, the central point of which is His death, and it speaks also of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans."
 - 24 – Young makes this huge statement: "This vs. is a Divine revelation of the fact that a definite period of time has been decreed for the accomplishment of all that which is necessary for the true restoration of God's people from bondage." Young (p.195)

Six RESULTS purposed (for the period of 70 sevens decreed)

- | <u>NASB Text</u> | <u>Young's Translation</u> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ○ to finish the transgression | to restrain the transgression |
| ○ to make an end of sin | to complete sin |
| ○ to make atonement for iniquity | to cover iniquity |
| ○ to bring in everlasting righteousness | to bring everlasting r. |
| ○ to seal up vision and prophecy | to seal vision and prophet |
| ○ to anoint the most holy <i>place</i> | to anoint a holy of holies |
- In regards to the "abomination of desolation" or as referred to in Dan 9:27's phrase, "...on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate..." (NASB) Young says:
 - Abominations – "The word has a primary reference to idols... the word must be used figuratively to describe **the worship of the Temple** after the veil had been rent... No longer was this the house of the Lord, but a house of abominations..."
 - "...wing of abominations..." -- "The word [wing] apparently refers to the **pinnacle of the temple** which has become so desecrated that it no longer can be regarded as the temple of the Lord, but as an idol temple." (p.218)
 - "one who makes desolate" (NASB), is seen in 9:27 to come "over or upon the wing of abominations, i.e., he comes over the summit or highest pinnacle of the Temple, thus signifying its utter destruction, "...inasmuch as the capture of the highest part presupposes the possession of all the rest" (H).
 - Young concludes about Daniel's use of the "...on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate...", "The historical reference, I believe, is found in the destruction of the Temple by Titus." (p.218) JMP: Titus, then, is the desolator.

c. My Summary – The Daniel 9 prophecy of the 70 weeks speaks to the time and events of the Messiah who would fulfill the promises of the OT – including the promise of judgment and desolation of the temple -- including the promise of God to dwell with man. Looking back over history in a few snap shots that pictured a future fulfillment, God did bring judgment and desolation upon the first temple **and** God did dwell with man.

God brought judgment and desolation upon the first temple when it was torn down by Nebudchanzer. And God did dwell with man both in the tabernacle in the days of Moses as evidenced by the visible manifestation of the shekinah glory, and then again in Solomon’s temple.

The temple became THE place of worship for people of God. It was the place God would meet with man. But it was only intended to be a picture of the ultimate dwelling place of God with man. The ultimate temple=dwelling of God with us was always to be realized in the Messiah, the Christ who would come; and in Christ, the temple WAS fulfilled. He was Immanuel, God with us.

Once the fulfillment had come in Christ, the partial, the picture the Temple would have, should have, lost its place of prominence. Can you imagine God the Father sending Jesus to be God with us as the fulfillment of the temple and then having man turn away from Jesus and keep worshiping at the temple. What a slap in the face to God.

The last phrase of Daniel 9:24-27 is translated admittedly awkwardly by Young as, “And until end and that determined shall pour upon the desolate.” He paraphrases this more accessibly as, “and until the full end which has been determined shall pour upon the desolate.” As we have already noted, Young sees the one making desolate = the desolator as Titus. In addition he takes the desolate as “...the ruins of the Temple and city...” He concludes, “Thus, since the Messiah has caused sacrifices and oblation to cease, there comes a desolator over the temple, and devastation continues until a full, determined end pours forth upon the desolation.” (p.219)

So we see God giving Daniel a prophecy of the Messiah’s coming as the fulfillment of the temple, of His being cut off, i.e., His death, and also of a desolator desolating the former temple which has become an abomination in light of the advent of God’s perfect and ultimate temple who is Jesus Christ. The abomination of desolation thought comes to Jesus’ disciples ears laden with images of the destruction of the temple.

With this rich loaded context in mind let’s go back to Mark 13:14. [read]

When you see the impending destruction of the temple and city, flee. This thought is brought out in the parallel account in the gospel of Luke. Luke 21:20 says, **“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.”** (NASB)

2. The “abomination of desolation” will be visible

- v. 14, **“When you see...”**
- You can see an advancing army

3. It will be “standing where it/he should not be”

- That is, from the human perspective it will be: “too close for comfort.” It will be dangerously close!

The second and related event of that particularly dangerous time is ...

B. A Severe Life Threatening Period of “Tribulation”

1. Mark 13:19-20 [read]

2. Big Time Tribulation

Lane sees Jesus warning of “a catastrophe without precedent” and points out that this is “Semitic hyperbole.” Jesus’ point is not so much that it is the greatest of all tribulations that has or ever will come upon mankind, as much as He is saying this is going to be bad, real bad.

Jesus used this same hyperbole in His Sermon on the Mount when He said in Mat 5, 29 “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

30 “If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.”

He was not commanding the physical removal of eye or hand, but was highlighting the seriousness of sin and the importance for effective remedy. Big language making a point!

This would be a time of significant hardship.

3. But, It would Not Be the Last Tribulation

19 "For **those days** will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, **and never will.**

By saying, “and never will” Jesus indicates there will be a time following the days of this tribulation. So Lane p.472.

The third event of that particularly dangerous time is that of ...

C. False Christs & False Prophets Leading People Astray

1. Mark 13:21-22 [read]

2. It is Worth Noting How These Imposters Will Deceive

- a. 21 – People will be saying that Christ is “here” or “there” **when He is not!**
I hear Jesus telling His disciples that during this particularly dangerous period of time when Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed, **He would not be there.** Certainly, He would not be there to save or turn away the judgment that would surely fall upon Jerusalem at this time.
- b. 22 – False Christs and false prophets will be showing **signs and wonders**
I hear Jesus telling His disciples that during this particularly dangerous period of time they should not think that signs and wonders necessarily indicate God’s activity. Rather they were to be seen coming from imposters who would use them to deceive and lead people away from God.

Carson sees 20-23 as a return to general discussion of the time of the entire I-AP and not limited to events of destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 only.

II. He Told His Disciples How to Respond to those Events

The first two actions Jesus calls His disciples to do when they encounter these events related to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple strike me as somewhat unexpected: “Flee” of v. 19 and “do not believe” of v. 21. I guess there truly is a time for everything. Context is king.

A. v. 14-18 – “Flee”

- This would not be the time to make thoughtful preparations and discuss alternatives. This is just, get out of Dodge and get out now time! Don’t worry about your stuff, just save your life.
- This does not so much reflect Jesus heart to deliver His disciples from suffering and death while on mission (which He had just prepared them to face in vv. 9-13) as it reflects His desire to excuse them from the judgment God was bringing upon Jerusalem and the temple.
- That Jesus instructed His disciples who were in Judea to flee from this event argues for this being a local not a global event. It was something that people could effectively flee from.

B. v. 21 -- “do not believe”

Jesus cautioned His disciples to NOT believe anyone claiming to have seen Christ during this time. This implies that during that time when the armies of Titus were coming against Jerusalem there would be people making false claims that the Christ was there. If people believed that the Christ was there in Jerusalem they would probably not flee but rally around Him thinking that with Him there was safety. And this of course is true. I would say that there is no greater place of safety than with Jesus Christ. But Jesus was not in Jerusalem as savior during this time. This was a time of judgment. Yes, Jesus saves. But not there and not then. Then and there, Jesus warned them to flee.

C. v. 23 – “take heed”

Being informed does make a difference in how one manages one’s life.

In Hawaii, there are no poisonous snakes. That means when you send the kids out to play in the forest they do not have to worry about snakes. But, when you send your kids out to play even in the mountains around here, they better “take heed” because there is a very real danger of harmful snakes. If you are hiking in the Yosemite valley you need to “take heed” of the bears. I appreciate being told about the snakes and bears that might harm me if I don’t take heed.

Jesus warned His disciples about the dangers that would accompany these events. With that warning, if they took heed they were able to escape to safety.

The terrible truth of it is that many did not heed Jesus warning, but were convinced that safety lay within the walls of Jerusalem, and great was the loss of life of those who turned a deaf ear to Jesus’ warnings.

This itself begs the question...

III. What Jesus would have Us Know about those Events?

A. They are All Within the I-AP in Which We Live

- 1. We should expect persecution, suffering and hardship until the end.**
See: end of John 15 and beginning of 16 Paul all those who live godly lives will suffer persecution...
- 2. We must be on mission throughout the entire I-AP – Preaching the gospel worldwide amidst persecution**
- 3. We must be alert against false Christs (anointed ones) and false prophets who are convincingly deceptive.**

B. The destruction of the temple is a particularly sharp pang of the IA-P that is thankfully behind us.

C. We have a Lord who warns us of Judgment to come so that we might not be caught off guard, but would rather escape it.

D. We should look at the situation of our lives in light of the sure return of Christ, i.e., in light of the end, the ultimate purpose of God.

Next week we will cover the verses of Mark 13 related to the return of Christ and the consummation of all that He inaugurated at His first advent. You may want to read in advance Mark 13 with a focus on verse 24-27.

Communion

It is what Jesus has already accomplished that I would ask us to focus on right now by way of preparation of our communion service. If you have come to know and trust in Jesus as the Christ, God's Anointed One, the fulfillment of all His promises of the OT to restore fallen creation to the order of His intention, then you have also been redeemed by Him. That means you are an adopted child of God, you are a new creation, you have God's Holy Spirit indwelling you. Although you must resist him, the devil has no effective power over you. Although the world will entice you, you need not succumb. You were formerly dead in your transgressions and sins, but you are now alive in Christ. You have sinned, but Christ has forgiven you. You were once separated, but Christ has now brought you near to God....

If you are a believer and you do not see yourself as forgiven and a new creation in Christ, turn from that and regard yourself as God has so declared you: joined to Him through faith in Christ, joined to your fellow believers by your common faith in Christ and common heavenly Father and common indwelling Spirit.

Receive the instruction of Paul and then come to the table and receive the elements. Please feel free to take the bread and the cup as you are ready and then stand and worship in song.

Conclusion

Recommended listening

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

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

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

ⁱ Dan 9:24-27 (NASB)

²⁴"Seventy ^(A)weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to ^(B)make atonement for iniquity, to bring in ^(C)everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.

²⁵"So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a ^(D)decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until ^(E)Messiah the ^(F)Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

²⁶"Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be ^(G)cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will ^(H)destroy the city and the sanctuary And its end will come with a ^(I)flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

²⁷"And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of ^(J)abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a ^(K)complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

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