

# Deliverance From Ingratitude

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*Deliverance*

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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**Crossroads Ministries**  
301 S. 8th Street  
Opelika, Alabama 36801

**Website:** [www.fbcopelika.com](http://www.fbcopelika.com)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers](http://www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers)

This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the gospel of Mark 13, and if you're a guest or visitor with us this morning, I want to invite you on a journey through the gospel of Mark, as we'll discuss in a moment, with a very strategic theme. But today in Mark 13, if you were not with us last week, we continue in a chapter that is one of not just the most strategic chapters but one of the most discussed chapters in all of scripture. In fact, if you have a study Bible, you'll notice that Mark 13 has a lot of parallels to Luke 21 and to Matthew 24. This is what we know as the Olivet Discourse in scripture. We are literally days away from the crucifixion, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and here on the Mount of Olives Jesus Christ, as we discussed last week, takes Peter, James and John and Andrew up by themselves and gives them a discourse, a lesson, a teaching on what you and I might call the Second Coming, eschatology in times.

And today as we go into Mark 13, I want to qualify the message in a variety of respects and the first one is this: today is going to feel more like teaching than it does preaching, and let me just go ahead and warn you in advance, if you are a note-taker, you might want to get two pens out this morning. For those of you who are more the electronic version, you might want to get both thumbs out, whichever one you prefer. A lot of information today in Mark 13 in regards to this issue, the area of being gracious or thankful.

You know, this is one of those seasons where we purposefully give thanks. This is one of those seasons where we tend to reflect back on days gone by and even sometimes days present to be thankful to God for the blessings of whom he has bestowed upon us. You know, one of the things that I've learned in life is the further removed you are from an event, the more thankful you can become regarding that event. You know, there's a lot of things in life we walk through and we don't appreciate it all, we don't like it all, in fact, at times we disdain it, but 20-30 years later, we're very thankful that's what the Lord brought us through, we're thankful that he challenged us, we're thankful that he strengthened us through whatever that may be and, in fact, it's not just the season of Thanksgiving, I know there are many people watching online from a variety of places, but you and I live in a very thanksgiving/gracious area of the world. All you have to do is travel because here in this area, if somebody opens a door for you going into a restaurant, what do you usually say? Thank you. If somebody is passing by and you accidentally

bump, you say, "Excuse me." "Oh, it's okay." There's a lot of thanksgiving that we give but the overwhelming majority, in fact, I would say almost near 100% of the gratitude that we express is to either something in the past or something in the present. You know, there's an old adage, no matter what the difficulties are of life, the challenges are of life, if you were to gather around a table with other people and everybody put their troubles and their struggles on the table, you'd always want to take your own back.

But how often do we give thanks in advance? How often do we give thanks for that which has not yet occurred? You see, here in Mark 13, these are Second Coming events, these are end time events, these are activities that have yet to occur, and today, today maybe we need to be delivered from an ingratitude in regards to what's around the horizon because a lot of times, even as a believer, we're struggling through things, we're walking through difficulties and we forget that no matter how bad it may be today, no matter how difficult it may be today, that as we read in Mark 13, there are days ahead for planet earth that he has prevented and protected his children from walking through. So today as we begin in Mark 13 in verse 14, I want to challenge us to have an attitude of gratitude or thanksgiving for that which is not yet, and as we're going to see, that which will not be.

Verse 14, Mount of Olives, Second Coming. It says,

14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains: 15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: 16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. 20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. 21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: 22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. 24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

Now I think we'd all confess this morning that's a pretty ominous passage of scripture. I mean, the Lord Jesus Christ is giving a description of days that hopefully you would not wish on your worst enemy, and yet here Peter, James, John and Andrew have been brought aside for this instruction. And so today, I want to walk through three very

specific areas of what Jesus just communicated in regards to future events, future activities on planet earth and the fact that you and I as believers in Jesus Christ can have an attitude of gratitude or thankful in regards to how we need to approach these areas. Now there are three areas we're going to look at: that which we should be looking for, whom we should be listening to, and the aspect of who in the end is really going to "lose." And as we walk through these three things, I want to describe the "what" and then explain the "why." Again, it's Second Coming, it's end times, a lot of information but hopefully today we'll understand how grateful and thankful we should be.

Let's begin with the aspect of what should we be looking for. Begin in verse 14, "But when you shall see the abomination of desolation." Now let me before we get into the specifics here, I want you to go back to verse 4. I want you to notice what happens as Jesus pulls these men on the side of the hill there on the Mount of Olives. Notice the questions that are asked. "When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of your coming?" These are two very critical questions that these men ask of which Jesus responds and answers absolutely perfectly, but I want to warn you, just because the personal pronoun is utilized does not mean the person in front of him is whom Jesus is speaking to.

Now this is a means of communication that we, as humanity, have done for thousands of years. Allow me to illustrate. How many times has somebody asked you a question about something and you say, "Well, when you see this, it means that"? It doesn't mean they necessarily have seen it. Allow me to give you an illustration. This is what we know as the throes of football season and there are times where things don't go as well as we would hope for them to go for our respective teams. Okay, it happens. Have you ever heard somebody say this that when you see somebody do this, you know the game is out of hand? You know what we call this, right? It's called Surrender Cobra. You're in a position of "we're not gonna win this game." When you see that, you don't have to be present, that just means anytime somebody puts themselves in that position, it means most likely their team is not going to win. We use this phrase about a lot of things, if you see this or when you see that it means this is what's happening. It does not necessarily say that you personally will experience, it's actually a means of communication of this is an indicator of that.

This is critical because notice what Jesus says, "But when you shall see the abomination of desolation as spoken by the prophet Daniel." Now if you're here this morning and you have no idea what that is, can we just agree it doesn't sound fun at all? But let me tell you what it is. Prophet Daniel, chapter 9. There is this chronology of end times laid out. In fact, the Bible says that for 490 years the Lord will bring judgment upon his people for their rejection of him. But there's this famous passage beginning in verse 24 of Daniel 9 that talks about this final week. By the way, Jeremiah clarifies that that week is actually a seven year time period, that there will be an individual whom we collectively know as the Antichrist, he will rise to such power and such authority that he will even get the people of God, the Jewish people, on his side. In fact, it says he'll make a covenant with them but that in the middle of the week, or 3 ½ years in, he will break the covenant, and when he breaks the covenant, Daniel calls it the abomination of desolation.

Now we've see foreshadows of this throughout time. In fact, in the second century BC, there was a leader who went into the Jewish temple and he sacrificed a pig, one of the most unclean of items in the Old Testament, in the Jewish temple. It created a response that you and I know and celebrate today of Hanukkah. So we see activities where individuals do horrific things in the "place of God," but the abomination of desolation even takes it to a new level. In 2 Thessalonians 2, it says this character known as the Antichrist will one day, he will go into the temple of God, into the Holy of Holies, and he will claim he is God. That's what this is saying.

Jesus says, "When you see this." Now he's not just addressing these four, he's addressing humanity throughout time that if you see this, when you see this. Did you notice the response? Run! Get outta there! It's about to turn loose! Now I know what some of you are thinking, "I thought this was a message about thanksgiving. I thought this was a message about being gracious. How am I supposed to have an attitude of gratitude when Jesus tells me about this event?" Let me tell you why: because you don't have to worry about it. You don't have to worry about the Antichrist. You don't have to worry about the abomination of desolation. And I know that when it comes to talking about the end times, book of Revelation, you get three people, you get 14 different opinions. I get that, but I can prove biblically why you don't have to be looking for this, you don't have to be worried about this, you don't have to be concerned about this.

Where does the abomination of desolation take place? In the temple, right? Did you know that at no time in history does God ever allow two temples to both be present at the same time for his purpose and his glory? Let me walk through a brief chronology for you. Whom we know as King Solomon, roughly about 1000 BC, the Lord uses to build a temple, a permanent place for the dwelling place of the presence of God, the holiness of God, the ark of the covenant, the sacrifices, etc. That temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. They came back, they rebuilt it, we collectively call it the Second Temple. Do you remember what happened in Matthew 27 when Jesus Christ breathed his last breath? When he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," remember what happened to that temple? The veil was torn from the top to the bottom and the earth quaked.

Why is that strategic? Because according to 1 Corinthians 6, who and where is the temple today? You. If you're an individual today who's admitted you've got a sin problem and asked Jesus to save you, according to the Bible you are the temple of the Holy Ghost, you are the place where the Spirit of God dwells. No longer in a geographical place on a mountain in Israel, the temple of God today is you, it is myself, it is the body of Christ. You see, that veil was torn and a new temple was made available.

Guess what the Bible says in Revelation 11? End times. Do you know there's going to be another temple built? I know people want to argue and fuss about that piece of dirt in the Middle East known as the Temple Mount, I know right now there's a Muslim mosque sitting in the middle, but I've got news for everybody, including the United Nations: there's going to be a temple built there one day. You say, "Well, how do you know?"

Because the Bible says it. The Bible says one day there's a temple. In fact, an angel shows it to whom we know as the Apostle John, measures it with a measuring of a man. There's the courts that are around it, the functionings therein. Ladies and gentlemen, you cannot have two separate temples at one time which means that this earthly temple must necessarily be removed before that one is built.

Now do you understand those passages in the Bible that says there will be a day where the Lord will shout and those that are dead in Christ and those that are alive in Christ will be raised together to be with the Lord? Because the temple of God within us must be removed before that physical "third temple" is ever built in the future. How thankful should we be that we don't have to live through what he just described? We don't have to worry about running for the hills. We don't have to worry about living out the movie "Red Dawn." We don't have to worry about having all this dried up food stored in our basement to survive these times. We don't have to worry about that mess. Why? Because you and I as children of the living God will be delivered from it, not to experience it, so why would we bother looking for it?

I know people that are just obsessed with, "Do you think that's the Antichrist? Do you think this?" Do you know what the Bible says in Titus 2? We look for the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ. We need to be thankful today we don't have to worry about who the Antichrist is or isn't going to be. We don't have to worry about the abomination of desolation. We don't have to worry about running for the hills. Why? Because as we read, this is an event for those last days when the body of Christ has been removed from.

But there's a second thing, not just what we need to be thankful to look for but listening for as well. Turn over to verse 21. He says, "And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." Today, we live in a world and it may just be me but I believe there are probably others that would agree with me, that it seems like the people who get the most attention are the ones who either scream the loudest or scream the most. If you can just out-volume somebody, you tend to get the attention. What does he say? He says if anybody rises up and claims that they're Christ, claims they have the answers to the world's problems, claim that they're the one that the Lord has sent, you don't have to worry about it because, I promise you, that's already been taken care of. You see, you and I have the privilege today of John 14. John 14, Jesus says, "Hey, don't panic, don't worry. If it were not so, I would have told you. I'm coming to get you. I've prepared a place for you." And then Thomas says, "How do we know?" And Jesus makes this famous statement in verse 6 of John 14, he says, "For I am the way, the truth and the life; nobody comes to the Father but by me." If you believe today that Jesus Christ is the one that was prophesied, that Jesus Christ is the one who lived, died and raised from the dead, you don't have to worry about any of these guys who show up saying they're the answer.

You don't have to worry about them. In fact, some years ago, a friend of mine called me and he said, "Jeff, I've got a story that's even going to rival some of your stories." I said, "Well, how good is your story?" He said, "I didn't just meet one, I met two people today

who claimed to be Jesus." I said, "Really?" Now this individual was a psychiatric pharmacist, okay? He worked in a place where people who struggle cognitively and he made sure that their medicines were all what they were supposed to be. He said, "In my office today, I had two patients who both believed that they were Jesus." He said, "I decided to hear them out. They got so mad at each other, they got in a fistfight in my office." He said, "I've actually seen Jesus fight Jesus."

Now we laugh at that because it's ludicrous but how many more Jim Jones, David Koresh's and others are humanity going to give attention and time to? Isn't it good to know that when these individuals rise on the scene claiming to have all the answers to humanity's problems, we don't have to listen to them? We don't have to worry? I'm thankful that when they come on the tv, I can just click it off because I don't need to hear what he has to say or she has to say because Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, the life; nobody comes to the Father but by me."

But he doesn't stop there, he talks about these prophets. You know, it's interesting we live in a world where people claim to be able to forecast the events of the future. If you don't believe me, just watch late night History Channel and they're always talking about people who have the ability to supposedly tell us what is or isn't going to happen in days future. What's fascinating to me is that when you begin to really peel away the layers, these folks who people claim to be prophets, you know, oftentimes they get quite a few things right but have you noticed how often they miss? Do you know what the Bible says in the book of Deuteronomy? It says you will know if a man's a prophet of God because he never misses, and if he misses, stone him to death. So why do you have Isaiah in your Bible? Never missed. Why do you have Jeremiah? Never missed. Why do you have Haggai? Never missed. Malachi? Never missed.

What does Jesus say? He says there's going to come a day in the future where people are going to rise up and claim to be the Christ, they're going to rise up and claim to have a word of prophecy for days ahead, and what does he say? Don't worry about listening to them. You don't worry about that. Why is this so important for us? Why is it so critical? Why should we be grateful? Why should we give thanksgiving? You know, in the book of Hebrews 1:1-2, I want to quote for you what scripture says. It says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke unto us in time past by the prophets." Verse 2, "Has now spoken unto us by his dear Son." I've got news for all of us: there is a spiritual gift of prophecy the Bible mentions of but we don't need a prophet anymore. We don't need anybody sitting in an office anywhere saying, "Just listen to me. I've got the answers." Why do we not need that? Because God's already closed the book. God's already told us how it's going to end. God has already raised from the grave, he's already shut the mouths of the prophets, and according to Hebrews 1 and 2, we don't need to worry about those guys anymore.

Have you noticed how easily distressed humanity gets when somebody gets on tv or on a podcast and says if we don't change or do this, then this horrible event is going to happen? It happens all the time, right? I don't know about you but I'm thankful that I can turn those guys off and not lose sleep about it. I am grateful that I don't have to worry

about these people who claim to have all the answers, I don't have to worry about these folks who are saying that this is going to happen in this time and in that time because according to what Jesus said, guess what? There's going to come a day where these people rise up, they're going to take over what we know as the airwaves, and he warns us, "Don't listen to that."

I'm grateful today I don't have to look for the abomination of desolation. I'm grateful today I don't have to worry about listening to the loudest voice that comes on to tell me what may or may not occur. But last but not least, do you know why I'm grateful today? Because I'm not going to lose. You say, "What do you mean you're not going to lose?" Go to verse 24. It says, "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." What's being described in these verses? It's actually Revelation 19. If you're not familiar with that section of scripture, let me highlight just a few things. The Bible says in that famous Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week that we addressed in the first point, that there is coming a day that even Jesus described the worst time period in the history of mankind, and as you study therein, as you get closer to the end, it gets worse and worse. You notice the sun goes dark, the moon goes red, the stars fall out of the sky.

It is a horrific time period but what's going to happen? Jesus Christ is going to return. In fact, in Acts 1 when he ascended on high, he made it very clear. The angelic beings say, "Why do you continue to look up, for as he departed, he shall one day return." According to Revelation 19, there is coming a day at the end of all this stuff we've talked about today where Jesus Christ is going to physically literally return. Now the Bible says in Revelation 19 that the clouds will depart, that they will make a scene, they will make a way for him. He is pictured as descending on a white horse and he's pictured very differently than the gospel accounts. In fact, not only does he come on a white horse, the Bible describes that his clothing is brought up to the point where his thigh is visible. It's a war position and do you know what is inscribed on his thigh? "King of kings and Lord of lords." It says that his feet are as brass in judgment, out of his mouth goes a two-edged sword, that everything he speaks comes to pass. What is being described here? There is coming a day when Jesus returns, it's called a very famous battle, it's the battle of Armageddon, and do you know what happens? He wins. He wins the battle. People want to argue and fuss and fight and discuss. Guys, it's at that point, in fact, some of you have seen the bumper sticker, "Jesus is coming back and, boy, is he mad." That's what it's talking about. In fact, so much so that all of humanity under the tutelage of whom we know as the Antichrist has gathered themselves together against him to "push back," and the blood that is spilled at that battle is so significant that it says it will rise to the bridle of the horse, and I have a feeling it's going to be a really big horse, but even if it's not, can we just agree that's a lot of carnage that takes place?

Why should this have us give thanks? Why should this give us an attitude of gratitude? Because notice what it says in verse 26, they shall see the Son of Man coming. Well, who is the "they" there? Those are those that have rebelled against him. "In the clouds with

great power and glory." If you go to Revelation 19, do you know what it says specifically? Jesus Christ does not arrive alone. Do you know who he comes with? His saints. His army. Guess what? That's you and me. I don't know about you, but I'm grateful that one day when that final battle takes place, I'm on the winning side with him because I've got news for you, I don't like to lose, and I know y'all don't like to lose either because I see what you post on social media after football games. I know y'all don't like to lose. Nobody likes to lose. I tell my boys it is not a sin to win. Now it may be a sin the way you win but it is not a sin to necessarily win.

I like winning. Who doesn't like winning? I don't like losing. I don't know about you, but as we navigate current days as a believer in Jesus Christ, do you feel like some days all you take is just a small victory? It seems like all around is defeat, despondency, discouragement. Every time you wake up, it's like another battle, another struggle, another difficulty. It seems like right now as a believer in Jesus Christ, every battle that is fought we seem to lose. I don't know about you, but isn't it good to know that one day we win the big one? Because according to this, when he returns that battle is fought, you and I as his children, his saints, his army, we are behind him coming in victory, and according to what scripture says, you and I will reign with him on the earth for a thousand years and as his kings and as his priests.

This week, you and I are going to spend an inordinate amount of time being grateful, thankful, rightfully so for the blessings not just of the past year, the past decade, the past lifetime, whatever it may be. We will gather this week and we will be thankful for whatever food the Lord has allowed upon our table, whatever family and friends he's allowed around the table, but maybe today we ought to be grateful not just for the past and the present but for the future as well. We don't have to wake up every day wondering if this is the day to run to the hills. We don't have to wake up every day going, "Is that guy the right guy? Do we need to listen to him or not?" And no matter how it may be or how bad it might get, how thankful I am that the last battle is won by the Lord and I'm going to be wearing the same jersey he is.

An attitude of gratitude isn't just about the past, it can also be about the future. Today, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, if you have come to that place where you've asked him to forgive you and to save you, you're his child, you're his son, you're his daughter, you can be thankful. But if you're not, you can't and maybe today you say, "I'm on the wrong side of this equation." In just a minute, I'm going to give you an opportunity to be on the right side.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. As we gather in this place today, I know it has been just an inordinate amount of information regarding numerous passages but let me sum it up real quickly: on that day that Jesus Christ physically returns, there's only one of two sides that you can be on, you can be on the side that returns with him or on the side that's fighting against him, and the only thing that makes the difference is if you have bent and bowed your knee and confessed him as your Lord and your Savior. Today whether you're here in person or you're watching online or listening on the radio, if you're that person that says, "You know what? I'm on the wrong side of history. I'm on



the wrong side of things." Today you can be on the right side. The Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. What does that mean? It means admitting that you've done it your own way, not God's way, admitting that you have a sin problem and you've gone against the things of God and asking that Jesus Christ alone be the one who forgives and saves you.

If you're that person today, can I encourage you just to cry out not necessarily audibly, not necessarily the same words that I or somebody else might say, but maybe your heart's cry to God today would be something like this. "God, I recognize today I'm on the wrong side. God, I've listened to the wrong voices, I've gone down the wrong path but I understand and I believe now that I've got a sin problem that only Jesus can solve. God, I believe, I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he came on my behalf, he lived a sinless life on my behalf, he died a sacrificial death on my behalf. And God, I believe that three days later when he rose from the grave, he made it possible for my sins to be forgiven, he made it feasible for my soul to be saved. God, today I don't have all the answers to the struggles, the issues and the problems of life, but there is one thing I know and that's Jesus Christ is the only one who can save me from my sin condition. I'm asking you to do so, I'm asking you to forgive me in the best way I know how. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, if you're that person this morning on our campus or even online and you had that conversation with the Lord, we'd want to celebrate with you, we want to pray with you and for you. In a moment, I'm going to pray for us and we're going to stand and sing, we just invite you just to step out and step forward. We've got a whole team of folks who just want to hear your story and encourage you but I'd be willing to say there are a lot of us here this morning, you had that conversation years ago, in fact, some of you say, "Do you know what? I've been a believer for decades." Oftentimes it's difficult to be thankful when times are tough. Oftentimes it's difficult to have an attitude of gratitude when life isn't going the way that you'd hoped. But maybe today for those of you that need not step out and step forward, maybe it's about stepping out of here in a moment realizing, "I need to be thankful not just for what God has done but what God has kept me from and preserved me from and protected me from." In days ahead, knowing what we don't have to go through is such a reason to be thankful.

*Lord Jesus, today as we come to this time of Thanksgiving, forgive us, forgive us for not being thankful, forgive us for not having the proper perspective, forgive us from looking at what's around us and not looking to the hills for which our help comes from. Lord, whatever decision today that our hearts need to render, may we simply listen to you and your voice alone. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*