

Mark 13:24-37 – The End Of The Age

Jesus continued teaching about the destruction of the Jewish temple, and the end of the Jewish age. As a prophet, he told his disciples what was coming. As a shepherd, he prepared them to be safe. These words explain how the people of God changed from being a Jewish nation to being a world-wide church, when Jesus rose from the dead in the year 30 and judged and destroyed the Jewish temple and nation in the year 70. Therefore they are telling our story, and we can learn from them.

1. The coming of the Son of Man (v24-27)

Many people think these verses are about the end of the world. That is understandable. But in fact, these kinds of words were often used in the Old Testament about judgments on particular nations (e.g. Isaiah 13:1, 9, 34:4, Ezekiel 32:2, 7-8). Sometimes we use similar words – we say that a great event “shook the world” or “changed the world forever”. Jesus, as the Old Testament prophets, spoke about the physical creation to describe a great change in the spiritual world-order. He was speaking about the great change that would happen after he rose again and ascended. He was especially referring to Daniel 7:9-14. After four great world empires, Daniel saw that God's chosen king, the Messiah, would begin his rule over all peoples and nations, everywhere, forever. That is what Jesus began when he rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God in heaven. He is gathering his people from all over the world, into his kingdom. Jesus was telling his apostles that the Jewish age was over, and his world-wide kingdom was about to be established. Peter understood this and preached it in Acts 2:19-21 – note that Peter says that the sun and moon had been put out, on the day when the church began (Pentecost), just as Jesus said. We live in the days when the Messiah is reigning over the whole world, and calling his people to himself. That is an amazing privilege for us to rejoice in.

2. Be prepared! (v28-31)

In these verses, Jesus is emphasising the certainty of what he had said. He was not guessing, or suggesting something possible: but revealing what would really happen. We can watch the skies and the trees and predict what will soon happen in nature. So Jesus said that when the signs of the end of the Jewish age he had spoken appeared, they should make sure they were ready. It would happen in their lifetimes (v30). Nothing is more certain than the words of Jesus (v31). We should remember this in every challenge and trial – whatever else happens, we can be sure that what Jesus has told us in the Bible is the truth, and we must never let it go.

3. Watch! (v32-37)

Jesus is like a great and powerful man who has gone on a long journey. He will return! He did not give his apostles power to do whatever they pleased. He gave them responsibility to serve him, and prepare for his return. No servant should be found sleeping if his master told him to watch! In the same way, we know that Jesus will one day come to take us when we die, or come to take the whole church at his second coming. He has given us work to do, and told us to watch carefully, not to become spiritually lazy in the war against sin and error. Are you watching or sleeping?