

## Mark 13

### Introduction to Mark 13

Mark 13 is often called the “Olivet Discourse” because Jesus teaches these things on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem and the temple. The chapter combines:

- Prophecy
- Warning
- Encouragement
- Apocalyptic imagery
- A call to faithful endurance

Jesus is less concerned with satisfying curiosity about timelines and more concerned with forming resilient disciples.

### Mark 13:1–4 The Temple Will Be Destroyed

#### Read the Passage

#### Greek Insights

#### “What wonderful stones” (v.1)

The disciples marvel at the temple’s μεγάλοι λίθοι (*megalai lithoi*) “massive stones.”

The temple stones were enormous limestone blocks, some weighing many tons. The disciples are captivated by visible grandeur.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Why were the disciples so impressed with the temple?
2. What dangers come when faith becomes attached to buildings or institutions?
3. Jesus predicts total destruction. What does this reveal about earthly security?
4. Why would this prophecy sound almost impossible to first-century Jews?

### Mark 13:5–13 Deception, Conflict, and Persecution

#### Greek Insights

#### “See that no one leads you astray” (v.5)

Greek: βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ  
(*blepete mē tis hymas planēsē*)

The verb πλανᾶω (*planaō*) means:

- to deceive
- to wander
- to lead off course

It is where we get the English concept of being “planet-like,” wandering from the fixed path.

#### “Birth pains” (v.8)

Greek: ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων  
(*archē ōdinōn*)

\text{ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων} = \text{beginning of birth pains}

ὠδίν (*ōdin*) refers to labor contractions before childbirth.

Jesus’ point:

- chaos is not the end itself
- suffering precedes new creation

This imagery appears throughout the prophets:

- Book of Isaiah 26
- Book of Jeremiah 30
- Book of Micah 4

### “Endure” (v.13)

Greek: ὑπομείνας (*hypomeinas*)

From ὑπομένω (*hypomenō*):

- to remain under pressure
- to persevere
- to stay faithful beneath hardship

This is not passive survival but courageous endurance.

### Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of deception threaten Christians today?
2. Why does Jesus prepare believers for suffering instead of removing suffering?
3. How does the metaphor of birth pains reshape the way we view world crises?

### Mark 13:14–23 The Abomination of Desolation

#### Greek Insights

#### “Abomination”

Greek: βδέλυγμα (*bdelygma*)

This word refers to:

- something detestable
- profane
- spiritually polluted

It often describes idolatry that desecrates holy space.

#### “Desolation”

Greek: ἐρημώσεως (*erēmōseōs*)

Meaning:

- devastation
- abandonment
- ruin

Jesus references Book of Daniel and the desecration of the temple.

Historically this language echoed:

- Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrating the temple
- later Roman destruction of Jerusalem

#### “False Christs”

Greek: ψευδόχριστοι (*pseudochristoi*)

Not merely fake teachers, but counterfeit saviors promising deliverance apart from God.

### Discussion Questions

1. Why is spiritual deception a repeated warning in this chapter?
2. Why does Jesus emphasize urgency and discernment?

## **Mark 13:24–27 The Coming of the Son of Man**

### **Greek Insights**

#### **“Son of Man”**

Greek: ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου

(*ho huios tou anthrōrou*)

This title points back to Book of Daniel 7:13–14.

It carries:

- humanity
- divine authority
- kingship
- heavenly enthronement

#### **“With great power and glory”**

Greek:

- δύναμις (*dynamis*) = power
- δόξα (*doxa*) = glory, radiance, divine majesty

Jesus contrasts His future visible return with false secret claims.

### **Cosmic Language**

The darkened sun and falling stars echo prophetic judgment language from:

- Book of Isaiah 13
- Book of Joel 2
- Book of Ezekiel 32

Apocalyptic imagery communicates cosmic-scale divine intervention.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why is the “Son of Man” title so important?
2. What hope does Christ’s return bring?
3. How should believers live if Christ could return at any time?
4. Why is Jesus’ return described publicly and gloriously?

## **Mark 13:28–31 The Fig Tree**

### **Greek Insights**

#### **“You know”**

Greek: γινώσκετε (*ginōskete*)

This means more than intellectual knowledge.

It implies:

- discernment
- perception
- spiritual understanding

#### **“My words will not pass away”**

Greek:

οἱ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρελεύσονται

(*hoi logoi mou ou mē pareleusontai*)

The double negative οὐ μὴ (*ou mē*) is emphatic:

- “will absolutely never pass away.”

Jesus gives His words divine permanence.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What does the fig tree teach about spiritual awareness?
2. Why is discernment important in uncertain times?
3. What makes Jesus' words trustworthy?
4. How can believers avoid obsession with speculation?

### **Mark 13:32–37 Stay Awake**

#### **Greek Insights**

##### **“Stay awake”**

Greek: γρηγορεῖτε (*grēgoreite*)

Meaning:

- remain alert
- stay vigilant
- be spiritually watchful

It is present tense:

- keep watching continuously

##### **“Watch”**

Greek: ἀγρυπνεῖτε (*agrypneite*)

Literally:

- lose sleep over
- stay spiritually attentive

Jesus emphasizes readiness rather than prediction.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is the difference between watchfulness and fear?
2. Why do people become fascinated with date-setting?
3. What would faithful readiness look like in daily life?