

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

JESUS ON THE END TIMES – PART 1

- 1a. What influences have shaped your understanding of eschatology (i.e. End Time theology)?
- 1b. Were there any aspects of Pastor Jeremy's teaching on Mark 13 that challenged this understanding? If so, in what ways?
2. What has been your emotional response to conversations around the End Times (Excitement? Fear? Escapism? Procrastination?)? Why do you think this is? Do you think your response is appropriate to the intent of Scripture? (ie. Do you think God wants you to be excited? Afraid? To procrastinate, etc.)
3. Interact with Eugene Peterson's quote:
"Prophecy does not mean merely prediction. The prophet is the person who declares 'Thus says The Lord.' He speaks what God is speaking. He brings God's word into the immediate world of the present insisting that it be heard here and now.
The prophet says 'God is speaking now, not yesterday. God is speaking now, not tomorrow.' It is not a past word that can be analyzed and then walked away from. It is not a future word that can be fantasized into escapist diversion. It is a personal address now.
If we make the prophetic word a merely predictive word, we are procrastinating. Putting distance between ourselves and the application of the Word, putting off dealing with it until some future date."
 How does this strike you? Is this how you have viewed biblical prophecy? Are there any areas of your life that you have been procrastinating on, thinking you still have time to address them some time 'in the future'?
4. Read Mark 13:32-37. What does it practically mean for us to be 'watching and ready' even though we don't know when Jesus will return?
5. Going back to Peterson's quote about the fact that God is speaking now, do some listening prayer as a group. Ask Jesus the following question and listen quietly together to what Jesus might be saying: "Jesus is there anything I'm doing that you want me to stop doing? Is there anything I'm not doing that you want me to start doing?"

JESUS ON THE END TIMES - Part 1

Pastor Jeremy Peters

Mark 13:1-37

TWO KEY QUESTIONS POSED BY THE DISCIPLES:

1. **When will these things happen? (v. 4)**
2. **What will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled? (v. 4)**

General scholarly consensus regarding the interpretation of Mark 13:

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| v. 1-13 | Addresses the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple |
| v. 14-27 | Unclear whether the focus is on the Fall of Jerusalem or the Second Coming of Christ |
| v. 28-31 | Addresses the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple |
| v. 32-37 | Addresses the Second Coming of Christ and the End of the Age |

Q: WHY SHOULD VERSE 30 BE CONSIDERED THE BREAK POINT?

³⁰*"I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."*

- A1: The plain meaning of 'generation' is 30-40 years meaning everything up to verse 30 would be fulfilled by the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- A2: There is a mood shift in that everything preceding verse 30 includes details – wars, rumours of wars, false messiahs, false prophets, fleeing to the hills of Judea, don't return to your house, don't get your coat, references to this sign or that sign while everything after verse 30 lacks details. Not even the Son of Man knows the day or the hour.

6 QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Does the word generation have to be understood literally? (as in a 30-40 year period?)

Mark 13:30 *I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.*

The word 'generation' appears 26 times in the NT, and in every instance, it refers to a literal generation (30-40 years).

2. Could the gospel really be preached to all nations by 70 AD?

There are other instances (ex. Acts 2:5, Romans 1:8, Colossians 1:23) where references to 'every nation' 'all over the world' 'every creature under heaven' in all likelihood, refer to a large representative of known nations at that time.

3. Don't verses 21-22 refer to the Antichrist?

Mark 13:21-22 *At that time if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Messiah!" or, "Look, there he is" do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.*

The understanding of the term 'messiah' was, at the time, viewed through the lens of a political and military leader, not solely (or even primarily a spiritual one). A false messiah is then better understood, not as a satanic leader, but rather a political/military leader whose promise to bring political/military victory would be left unfulfilled.

4. Wouldn't we know if the cataclysmic events described in verses 24-25 had already happened?

Mark 13:24-25 *But in those days, following that distress,*

*"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."*

This particular wording is found first in Isaiah 13:10 and Isaiah 34:4, referring (metaphorically) to judgment on Babylon and Edom respectively.

5. Doesn't verse 26 clearly speak of the Second Coming of Christ?

Mark 13:26 *At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.*

The Greek word translated as 'coming' can also be translated as 'going' depending on the context. It is possible that a more accurate translation would be 'going on the clouds of heaven' in which case, this could refer to the ascension of Jesus. (cf. Matthew 26:64)

6. Wouldn't there be some obvious record of angels 'gathering the elect' from the four corners of the earth?

Mark 13:27 *And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.*

The Greek word translated as 'angels' could be translated as 'messengers', so this could simply be a very visual picture of the missionary task given to the church.
