

The End of Our Age – The Coming of Christ.
Discussion Notes on Mark 13
For Home Groups week beginning 11th January 2010.

Welcome

Q: What is the best or worst thing that has ever happened to you?

(Ice-breaker questions are valuable if they are quick and if everyone feels encouraged to contribute. It helps introduce the topic, helps people to “own” the study, and allows people to invest something of themselves in the discussion).

Word - Please read all of Mark 13.

This is an apocalyptic (meaning to “reveal”) prophecy. However, it can be understood to reveal 3 time-horizons for us. I think Jesus is talking about something (for us) that has already happened, something that will happen in the future at the end of time, and something that can happen at any time.

Jesus is talking about something that (for us) has already happened.

Q: What were the disciples admiring in v1 and why?

Q: Why does Jesus say what he says in v2? What is he trying to do?

Q: What things seem permanent for us in our age? What would it take for them to be swept away?

Q: How should that make you feel?

Jesus is talking about something that will happen in our future.

He is talking about the time when he comes again in power and the world as we know it is wrapped up, the stars fall from the sky and the planets are dissolved. He is talking about his second coming (his first coming he came as a baby: incognito, vulnerable, meek and mild – his second coming, he comes as Lord of the Universe: unmistakable, terrible in power, Lord of Glory). And the world ends.

Q: Some people think with advances in science, human-rights, technology, economy and politics the world is going to get better and better – does v5-v8 agree with this? What is it about human nature that cannot be changed without God’s grace?

Q: v9-20 describes the state of the world towards the end of time. What do you conclude this for Christians?

Q: If the world gets this bad, why might Jesus delay his second-coming? (Rom 11:25-26, Gen 18:23-25+)

Q: Does the idea of the end of this world fill you with delight or terror, and why?

The Bible is emphatic: one day God will wrap the world up. One day he will say “enough, is enough”. One day “earth will end, and heaven will begin”. One day everything we count as permanent will pass away and we shall see God as he truly is. For every verse in the Bible that talks about Jesus’ first coming, there are 8 times as many that describe his Second. On average the second coming is mentioned once in every 15 verses in the New Testament (some 300 times). It is mentioned in the Old some 1,845 times. It occurs 60 times more frequently than Communion.

Q: Why is it, that this clear teaching has so little impact upon our life?

Jesus is talking about will happen at the end of OUR time, what is happening all around us, now. You see there will be a time for each of us – when the sky will grow dark and all that is substantial will seem to melt away, and each of us will see the coming of Christ in powerful glory. There will be a time for each of us when the brightness of life will fade, when the importance of the material will become immaterial, when we slip from this world in death. It will happen.

Q: When this happens for us, what do we need to know and what do we need to cling onto (see v31 & v26).

Therefore this must change how we think.

In v28 Jesus says “learn this lesson from the fig tree: as soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near”.

Q: What do the signs of our aging tell us?

Q: How do people today misread and ignore the signs? Why is this foolish?

It must change how we focus.

Q: Who is the owner in v34?, what is the house? who are the servants? and what do we make of each having assigned tasks?

*Q: If we lived ready/prepared/aware of the possibility that **we** might die at any point – how would this practically change our focus?*

*Q: If we lived ready/prepared/aware of the possibility that **others** might die at any point – how would this practically change our focus?*

It must change how we live.

When we are afraid we tend to want things around us to be the same (like stable anchor points in a world of shifting sands).

Q: Do you think as we get older we should become more adventurous or less?

In the world, many people treat retirement as a time to take life easy and enjoy oneself. However, at the end of a race the athlete speeds up rather than slows down!

Q: In retirement, do you think we should spend our time being more “me focussed” or less? Even if our body begins to slow down how can our spiritual life become more vibrant?

Q: In what ways does our fear of death rob us of the joy of imminent total salvation?

Q: How should Heb 11v13-16 change how we think, focus and live?