

CHAPTER 13

INTRODUCTION TO MARK 13

Ver. 1. *And as he went out of the temple*, etc..] The Ethiopic version reads, “as they went out”; Christ and his disciples: for when Christ went out of the temple, the disciples went out with him; or at least very quickly followed him, and came to him, as appears from what follows; though the true reading is, “as he went out”: and the Syriac and Persic versions are more express, and read, “as Jesus went out”: for having done all he intended to do there, he left it, never more to return to it:

one of his disciples: it may be Peter, who was generally pretty forward, and commonly the mouth of the rest, as this disciple was, whoever he was: the Persic version reads, “the disciples”; and Matthew and Luke represent them in general, as observing to Christ, the beauty and grandeur of the temple, as this disciple did: who

saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings [are here]. The temple, as repaired by Herod, was a very beautiful building, according to the account the Jews give of it, and its stones were of a very great magnitude; (see Gill on “^{ABD}Matthew 24:1”).

Ver. 2. *And Jesus answering said unto him*, etc..] The Persic version reads, “unto them”; and so Beza's most ancient copy but as that question is put by one, the reply is made to him:

seest thou these great buildings? how beautiful and strong they are. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, add the word all; and the sense is, dost thou take a survey of all these buildings, and of the whole of this stately edifice? and dost thou not admire the strength and grandeur of them? and dost thou not think they will be of long duration, and that the demolition of them is scarcely possible?

There shall not be left one stone upon another. The Syriac and Arabic versions add, “here”: as in (^{ABD}Matthew 24:9), and so it is read in four of Beza's copies, and in others:

that shall not be thrown down; (see Gill on “^{<41B>}Matthew 24:2”).

Ver. 3. *And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives*, etc..] On the east of Jerusalem:

over against the temple: where he could have a full view of it; the eastern wall of the temple being lower than the rest; (see Gill on “^{<41B>}Matthew 24:3”).

Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, asked him privately; apart from the rest of the disciples, they being, especially the first three, his favourites, and very familiar with him.

Ver. 4. *Tell us when shall these things be?* etc..] When the temple will be destroyed, and these fine buildings shall be demolished, and not one of these large stones shall be left upon another:

and what shall be the sign when all these things [shall be] fulfilled? And what is the sign of his coming, and of the end of the world, as Matthew relates; (see Gill on “^{<41B>}Matthew 24:3”).

Ver. 5. *And Jesus answering them*, etc..] His four disciples, Peter, John, James, and Andrew: “began to say”; or “said”, a way of speaking frequent with this evangelist:

take heed lest any man deceive you; (see Gill on “^{<41B>}Matthew 24:4”).

Ver. 6. *For many shall come in my name*, etc..] Taking upon them the name of the Messiah: saying,

I am [Christ]; the word “Christ”, is rightly supplied from (^{<41B>}Matthew 24:5); otherwise in the original it is only, “I am”; which the Persic version doubles, reading it, “I am indeed, I am”: he that was promised and expected, the true Messiah; he that was to come:

and shall deceive many; (see Gill on “^{<41B>}Matthew 24:5”).

Ver. 7. *And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars*, etc..] Among the Jews themselves, and with the Romans:

be not troubled; keep your place, abide by your work, go on preaching the Gospel, without distressing yourselves about the event of things:

for [such things] must needs be: being decreed by God, foretold by Christ, and made necessary by the sins of the people:

but the end shall not be yet; of the temple, of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish state and nation; (see Gill on “^{4B16}Matthew 24:6”).

Ver. 8. *For nation shall rise against nation*, etc..] The nations of the world one against another, and the Romans against the Jews, and the Jews against them:

and kingdom against kingdom; which is a synonymous phrase with the former, and what the Jews call, *twnw twl m*, “different words”, expressing the same thing, often used in their commentaries:

and there shall be earthquakes in divers places; of the world:

and there shall be famines: especially in Judea, as in the times of Claudius Caesar, and at the siege of Jerusalem:

and troubles; public ones of various sorts, as tumults, seditions, murders, etc.. This word is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions.

These are the beginnings of sorrows; as of a woman with child, as the word signifies; whose pains before, though they are the beginnings and pledges of what shall come after, are not to be compared with those that immediately precede, and attend the birth of the child: and so all those troubles, which should be some time before the destruction of Jerusalem, would be but small, but light afflictions, the beginning of sorrows, in comparison of what should immediately go before, and attend that desolation; (see Gill on “^{4B17}Matthew 24:7”), (see Gill on “^{4B18}Matthew 24:8”).

Ver. 9. *But take heed to yourselves*, etc..] This does not so much regard their doctrine and conversation, they were to take heed to; in which sense this phrase is sometimes used; but the security of their persons and lives; and the advice is, to take care of them selves, as much as in them lay, how they came into the hands of the persecuting Jews, and exposed themselves to danger, when at any time it could be avoided:

for they shall deliver you up to councils; their greater and lesser sanhedrim; the one consisting of seventy one persons, the other of twenty three, and the least of three only; and before the greater of these, Peter and John were brought, quickly, after the ascension of Christ:

and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; with forty stripes, save one, as the Apostle Paul was, five, times:

and ye shall be brought before rulers; governors of Roman provinces, as the same apostle was, before Gallio, Festus, and Felix:

and kings for my sake; for the sake of professing Christ, and preaching his Gospel; as some of the apostles were, before Herod, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, and others:

for a testimony against them: both against the rulers and kings before whom they should be brought, and bear a testimony for Christ, and against the Jews, who should bring them thither; (see Gill on “~~<1017>~~Matthew 10:17”), (see Gill on “~~<1018>~~Matthew 10:18”).

Ver. 10. *And the Gospel must first be published among all nations.*] The Syriac version reads, “my Gospel”; the Gospel which Christ was the author, subject, and preacher of; this “must be published”. There was a necessity of the promulgation of it by the will of God, the command and commission of Christ; and for the gathering in of the Jews, that were the elect of God, “among all nations” of the world, especially in the Roman empire; and that “first”, or before the destruction of Jerusalem; (see Gill on “~~<1214>~~Matthew 24:14”).

Ver. 11. *But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up*, etc.] Lead to councils and courts of judicature, and deliver up to kings and rulers, to the civil magistrate, to be punished by the secular arm:

take no thought before hand; be not previously anxious, and carefully solicitous, in a distressing way:

what ye shall speak: to kings and rulers, by way of apology for yourselves, and your own innocence, and in defence of the Gospel:

neither do ye premeditate; or “meditate”, as the generality of copies read: Beza says in one copy it is read, “premeditate”: and so in one of Stephens's, as we render it: this clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions:

but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour; whatever shall be immediately suggested to your thoughts, be put into your minds, and laid upon your hearts:

that speak ye; freely and boldly without the fear of men:

for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost: not but that they did speak, but they were not the principal authors, either of the matter they spoke, or of the words and language in which they spoke; they were only the instruments of the Holy Ghost; they spoke as they were moved by him: hence their wisdom and eloquence in their self-defence, were amazing, and their arguments strong and unanswerable; (see Gill on “⁴⁰⁰⁹Matthew 10:19-20”)

Ver. 12. *Now the brother shall betray the brother to death,* etc..]

Signifying, that such should be the rage of men, particularly the Jews, against Christ and his Gospel, that those that were in the nearest relation, were of the same flesh and blood, children of the same parents, should betray and deliver up each other into the hands of the civil magistrate, in order to be put to death:

and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death; things unnatural and shocking; (see Gill on “⁴⁰¹²Matthew 10:21”).

Ver. 13. *And ye shall be hated of all men,* etc..] Not only of your friends and relations of your countrymen the Jews; but of all men, the generality of men, in, all nations of the world, wherever they came:

for my name's sake; for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, they professed and preached:

but he that shall endure; reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, patiently; or persevere in the faith of Christ, in the profession of his name, and in preaching his Gospel:

to the end; of such troubles, and of life:

the same shall be saved; if not with a temporal, yet with an everlasting salvation; (see Gill on “⁴⁰¹²Matthew 10:22”), (see Gill on “⁴⁰¹³Matthew 24:13”).

Ver. 14. *But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation,* etc..] The Roman army encompassing Jerusalem, which was an abomination to the Jews, and an “impure sign” of their destruction, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; and a desolating one to their nation, city, and temple:

spoken of by Daniel the prophet, in (²¹⁰⁷Daniel 9:27). This clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and was not found by Beza, in two of his copies, and is thought to be transcribed from Matthew:

standing where it ought not; round about the city, in the midst of it, and even in the temple: in one of Beza's exemplars it is added, "in the holy place", as in Matthew; and so it is read in the Ethiopic version:

let him that readeth understand; either the passage in Daniel, or the citation of it by the evangelist, when he shall see this come to pass: this seems to be rather the words of the evangelist, than of Christ; since this was not written (and so not to be read), but spoken by Christ; and since his usual phrase was, "he that hath ears, let him hear": though indeed the same exhortation is in Matthew, and may be understood of Christ, as it may refer to the written prophecy in Daniel, and indeed to the Gospel, which might be read before this event came to pass: (see Gill on "⁴¹⁴⁵Matthew 24:15").

Then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains; they that are in Jerusalem, or in any of the cities and towns of Judea, let them make their escape, as soon as possible, to the mountainous parts of the country; where they may be more safe from, the devastations of the Roman army; (see Gill on "⁴¹⁴⁶Matthew 24:16").

Ver. 15. *And let him that is on the house top*, etc..] On the battlements of the house, either for diversion or devotion:

not go down into the house; in the inner way by the stairs, or ladder within doors:

neither enter therein; being come down from the top of the house, by stairs, or a ladder without, which was usual:

to take any thing out of his house; to take care of his goods, or take any thing along with him, that might be useful in his flight, and journey, and stay abroad; (see Gill on "⁴¹⁴⁷Matthew 24:17").

Ver. 16. *And let him that is in the field*, etc..] At work, in any sort of business there,

not turn back again: either to his own house, or rather to that part of the field where he laid down his clothes:

for to take up his garment; but let him flee without it, or otherwise he would be in great danger; (see Gill on “^{<<4218>}Matthew 24:18”).

Ver. 17. *But woe to them that are with child*, etc..] Who because of their burdens, would be very unfit for, and very incapable of fleeing with any haste; and therefore very liable to fall into the hands of the enemy, and become their prey:

and to them that give suck in those days; who could not bear to leave their children behind, and yet would not be able to carry them with them; at least not without great trouble, and which would much retard their flight, and endanger their being taken by the enemy; (see Gill on “^{<<4219>}Matthew 24:19”).

Ver. 18. *And pray ye that your flight be not in winter*.] When days are short, roads bad, the weather inclement; and when to lodge in mountains, is very incommodious, and uncomfortable. The Persic version adds, “neither on the sabbath day”; (see Gill on “^{<<4220>}Matthew 24:20”).

Ver. 19. *For in those days shall be affliction*, etc..] What with the close siege of the Romans; the fury of the zealots, and seditious; the rage of different parties among the Jews themselves; the ravage of the sword, both within and without, together with dreadful plagues and famines:

such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be; of which there never was the like in any age, and cannot be paralleled in any history, since the beginning of time, or the world was made, or any thing in it, down to that period; nor ever will the like befall any one particular nation under the heavens, to the end of the world; (see Gill on “^{<<4221>}Matthew 24:21”).

Ver. 20. *And except that the Lord had shortened those days*, etc..] Had determined that those days of affliction should be but few, and not last long; that the siege should not be longer continued, and the devastations within and without be prolonged:

no flesh should be saved; there would not have been a Jew left; that nation and race of men must have been utterly destroyed from off the face of the earth:

but for elect's sake, whom he hath chosen; in Christ, unto eternal salvation; who were either then upon the spot, called or uncalled, or that were to spring from in succeeding times:

he hath shortened the days; he hath determined they shall be but few, that a remnant might be saved, and among them his elect; or from whom should descend, such as he had chosen, who should be saved with an everlasting salvation: though the people in general have been given up to blindness and unbelief, yet they are preserved as a distinct people in the world; and in the latter day will be called and converted, and all Israel shall be saved and therefore it was the will of God to shorten those days of affliction, that they might not be entirely cut off, but that a number might be left, as a stock for future ages; (see Gill on “⁴¹²²Matthew 24:22”).

Ver. 21. *And then if any man shall say to you*, etc..] During those days of tribulation and affliction, or when shortened and at an end:

lo! [here is] Christ, or lo! [he is] there; the Messiah has appeared in such or in such a place, to deliver you from your national distresses and calamities, and from the Roman yoke and bondage:

believe him not; give no credit to such a report, for the reason following; (see Gill on “⁴¹²³Matthew 24:23”).

Ver. 22. *For false Christs and false prophets shall rise*, etc..] As there did, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem:

and shall show signs and wonders; as they pretended to do, and did, at least to the appearance of people:

to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect; who were chosen in Christ, unto eternal life; in consequence of which they truly believed in him, and were constant followers of him; but this was not possible: though such was the force of their deception, that there was apparent danger of it, were it not for the power and grace of God; (see Gill on “⁴¹²⁴Matthew 24:24”).

Ver. 23. *But take ye heed*, etc..] The Persic version adds, “of them”; of the false Christs, and false prophets: for though the purposes of God, concerning the salvation of his elect, are infrustrable; his promises are yea and amen; his grace is efficacious and irresistible, and his power uncontrollable; and the salvation of his chosen ones certain; yet it becomes

them to be on their guard against every deception, and temptation, and to make use of all means for their perseverance:

behold, I have foretold you all things; relating to the destruction of the temple, city, and nation of the Jews; the signs that would go before it, as the disciples had desired; the miseries and calamities that would attend it, and the danger they would be exposed to through false Christs, and false prophets; and therefore would be inexcusable, if they did not observe the caution he now gave them: and moreover, when all these should be accomplished, they would remember that he had told them of them beforehand; which would be a proof of his omniscience, and so an establishment of them in the truth of him, as the Messiah; (see Gill on “^{<4125>}Matthew 24:25”).

Ver. 24. *But in those days, after that tribulation*, etc..] That is, after the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and the miseries and calamities attending it, in the times immediately following it; (see ^{<4123>}Matthew 24:29);

the sun shall be darkened: so the Shekinah, or glory of the divine majesty was withdrawn, and all the symbols of the divine presence were gone, when the temple was destroyed:

and the moon shall not give her light; the ceremonial law, which though abolished by the death of Christ, was observed by the Jews as long as the temple stood; but now ceased, particularly that principal branch of it, the daily sacrifice; (see Gill on “^{<4123>}Matthew 24:29”).

Ver. 25. *And the stars of heaven shall fall*, etc..] The Jewish Rabbins and doctors, who fell off from the written word, and compiled their “Misna”, or oral law, their book of traditions, and set it up above the Bible, the foundation of which was laid immediately upon their dispersion.

And the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken; the ordinances of the legal dispensation, which were shaken before, but now so shaken as to be removed; compare (^{<37116>}Haggai 2:6) with (^{<38226>}Hebrews 12:26,27); (see Gill on “^{<4123>}Matthew 24:29”).

Ver. 26. *And then shall they see the son of man*, etc..] Not in person, but in the power of his wrath and vengeance; of which the Jews then had a convincing evidence, and full proof; and even of his being come in the

flesh, as if they had seen him in person: this shows, that the sign of the son of man, in (^{4BB1}Matthew 24:30) is the same with the son of man:

coming in the clouds with great power and glory; not to judgment, but having taken vengeance on the Jewish nation, to set up his kingdom and glory in the Gentile world; (see Gill on “^{4BB1}Matthew 24:30”).

Ver. 27. *And then he shall send his angels*, etc..] The ministers of the Gospel to preach it, and plant more churches among the Gentiles, since that at Jerusalem was entirely broken up:

and shall gather together his elect; that is, he the son of man, or Christ, shall gather them by the ministry of his servants; or “they shall gather them”, as the Ethiopic version reads; and as Beza says it is read in a certain copy: these ministers shall be the means of gathering such whom God has chosen from all eternity, to obtain salvation by Christ, out of the world, and unto Christ, and into a Gospel church state: even

from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of the heaven; be they where they will, on earth, and under the whole heavens; (see Gill on “^{4BB1}Matthew 24:31”).

Ver. 28. *Now learn a parable of the fig tree*, etc..] Our Lord was now upon the Mount of Olives, in one part of which fig trees grew in great plenty, and one, or more, might be near, and in view; and it was the time of year, the passover being at hand, for its putting forth:

when her branch is yet tender; and soft and opening, through the sap now in motion:

and putteth forth leaves; from the branches:

ye know, that summer is near; from such an appearance on the fig tree; (see Gill on “^{4BB1}Matthew 24:32”).

Ver. 29. *So ye, in like manner*, etc..] This is an accommodation of the parable to the present case:

when ye shall see these things come to pass; the signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and especially the abomination of desolation, or the Roman army surrounding it:

know that it, or he is nigh, even at at the doors; either that the destruction of Jerusalem is near; or that the son of man is just ready to come to take

vengeance on it; or as Luke says, (^{<4213E>}Luke 21:31), the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; or a more glorious display of the kingly power of Christ, in the destruction of his enemies, and a greater spread of his Gospel in the Gentile world; (see Gill on "^{<41B3>}Matthew 24:33").

Ver. 30. *Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass*, etc..] Not the generation of men, in general, or Jews in particular, nor of Christians; but that present generation of men, they should not all go off the stage of life,

till all these things be done; which were now predicted by Christ, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the signs of it, and what, should immediately follow upon it; (see Gill on "^{<42B4>}Matthew 24:34").

Ver. 31. *Heaven and earth shall pass away*, etc..] Which may be understood either affirmatively, as what will be at the second coming of Christ; or comparatively, rather than any thing said by Christ should; and so shows the certainty and irreversibility of his predictions, as it follows:

but my words shall not pass away; which is true of all the words of Christ he ever spake, and here particularly relates to those he had just delivered, concerning the calamities that should come upon the Jewish nation; (see Gill on "^{<42B5>}Matthew 24:35").

Ver. 32. *But of that day, and of that hour*, etc..] Of Jerusalem's destruction; for of nothing else had Christ been speaking; and, it is plain, the words are anaphorical, and relate to what goes before:

knoweth no man; nay, they that lived to see it, and have spoken of it, are not agreed about the particular day, when it was; much less did they know it beforehand, or could speak of it, and make it known to others:

no, not the angels which are in heaven; who are acquainted with many of the divine secrets, and have been employed in the imparting them to others, and in the executing divine purposes:

neither the Son; Christ, as the son of man; though he did know it as the Son of God, who knows all things, and so this; but as the son of man, and from his human nature he had no knowledge of any thing future: what knowledge he had of future things in his humanity, he had from his deity; nor, as man, had he any commission to make known, nor did he make known the day of God's vengeance on the Jews:

but the Father; who has the times and seasons in his own power, for the executing of any particular judgment on a nation, or the general one; (see Gill on “^{f235}Matthew 24:36”).

Ver. 33. *Take ye heed, watch and pray*, etc..] This seems to be the principal reason why the day and hour of Jerusalem's destruction, though known by the Father, were not made known to any man, neither to the angels, nor by them; nor to the son of man in the days of his flesh, nor by him when on earth; that his people might be upon their guard, against false Christs, and prophets, and their deception; and watch unto prayer, and in it, lest they fell into temptation, and that day should come upon them unawares:

for ye know not when the time is; the exact and precise time: for though the people of God had notice of it, and were sensible it was at hand, and did make their escape out of Jerusalem; yet they knew not the exact time, but that it might be sooner or later; and the unbelieving Jews were blinded, and in the dark about it to the very last; (see Gill on “^{f242}Matthew 24:42”).

Ver. 34. [*For the son of man is*] *as a man taking a far journey*, etc..] Or this case of the son of man's coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, is like a man that takes a journey into a far country. This puts me in mind of a question asked ^{f230} by the Jews:

“what *hqwr rd*, “a far journey” from Modiim, and without.”

from Modiim, according to the Gemara ^{f231}, and commentators ^{f232} on this passage, was a place fifteen miles from Jerusalem; so that, according to them, fifteen miles were reckoned a far journey ^{f233}.

Who left his house; and his goods in it, to the care and management of others during his absence:

and gave authority to his servants; to govern his house, and exercise power one over another, according to their different stations;

and to every man his work; which he was to do, while he was gone, and to give him an account of when he returned:

and commanded the porter to watch; his house, and take care that it was not broke open by thieves, and plundered of the substance that was in it. So Christ, when he ascended on high, went to heaven, the land afar off; left his house, his church, particularly in Judea, and at Jerusalem, to the care of

his apostles, and gave authority to govern it, according to the laws, rules, and directions prescribed by him; and assigned every man his particular work, for which he gave him proper gifts and abilities; and ordered the porter to be on his watch, not Peter only, but all the apostles and ministers, whose business it is to watch over themselves, and the souls of men committed to their care.

Ver. 35. *Watch ye therefore*, etc..] Against false Christs, and false prophets; over yourselves, and the whole church; for the words are particularly addressed to the disciples of Christ:

for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; when Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven, and in earth, is named, who is a Son in his own house, is an high priest over the house of God, and Lord of his church and people, whom he has bought with his blood, and provides for with his grace, and by his Spirit, when he will come to break up housekeeping with the Jews, and bring his wrath upon them to the uttermost: whether

at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning. This is agreeably to the division of the night among the Jews, who speak of the first watch, the middle of the night, the cock crowing, and morning, as distinct from each other. The three first of these we have in one passage ^{f234}:

“every day they remove the ashes from the altar, *rbgh tayraqb*, “at cock crowing”, or near it, either before, or after it; and on the day of atonement, *twhm*, “at midnight”; and on the feast days, “at the first watch”,”

the same with the evening here: and elsewhere the morning and cock crowing are distinguished ^{f235};

“for a last of the congregation, how long may a man eat and drink? until the pillar of the morning ascends, (or until it is morning,) the words of R. Eliezer ben Jacob; R. Simeon says, until cock crowing.”

And so the phrase, from cock crowing till morning, is used by them ^{f236}. The Romans also divided the night in like manner, into evening, the dead of the night, or midnight, cock crowing, and the morning ^{f237}. The allusion seems to be to the time of the president of the temple's coming into it, who

had the management of the affairs of it, and of appointing to each priest his work: it is said ^{f238},

“whoever would remove the ashes from the altar, rose up early, and washed himself before the president came; but in what hour does the president come? not at all times alike: sometimes he comes, **rbgh tayrqm**, “at cock crowing”, or near it, before it, or after it; and the president comes and knocks for them, and they open to him; and he says unto them, whosoever has washed himself, let him come and cast lots: they cast lots, and he is worthy whom he counts worthy.”

Such who understand these words of Christ's coming by death, or at judgment, apply these seasons to the several ages of men, as childhood, youth, manhood, and old age.

Ver. 36. *Lest coming suddenly*, etc..] Unthought of, and unexpected, at an unawares:

he find you sleeping; inactive in the exercise of grace, and negligent in the performance of duty; unprepared for his coming, and unfit for service.

Ver. 37. *And what I say unto you*, etc..] The four disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew; who came privately to him, and put to him the questions, which occasioned this long discourse; (see ^{<4138>}Mark 13:3,4).

I say unto all. The Syriac and Persic versions read, “you all”; meaning all the rest of his apostles, and all his disciples and followers in Jerusalem, and in all Judea; who were all concerned in these things, and whom it became to

watch, and be upon their guard, and cast off all sloth and negligence; since they knew not soon the son of man would come, and all these evil things would be brought upon the Jewish nation, city, and temple: and the same exhortation is suitable to saints in all ages, times, and places, on account of the various snares, temptations, and evils, that they are liable to, the suddenness of death, and the uncertainty of the second coming of Christ.