

**Day 71 (Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November)****Read Mark Chapter 13 verses 14 to 23**

## The Desolating Sacrilege

Christ now foretells two awful times. The first was before the Fall of Jerusalem in AD70 when the Temple was destroyed. The 'desolating sacrilege' was a term used by the Prophet Daniel for the Temple being desecrated. Eusabius, who wrote a History of The Early Church, records that the Christians in Jerusalem fled to a town called Pella. The second time is still to come. Christ warns us that imposters will try to mislead Christians, misinterpreting events and making false predictions. Mercifully, the Lord has cut short these times.

## Questions to think about

1. People throughout history have mistakenly predicted dates when they say things will happen. What should we not do? (verse 22)
2. Does the passage describe God protecting His people, or just letting them suffer?
3. Why does Christ warn us about these things?

## A Prayer you may wish to say

Almighty God and our loving Heavenly Father, thank you that we need not be frightened by awful events. You know everything that is coming. Thank you that all things are in your hands and our eternal future is safe with you. Teach us your truth in your Word and protect us from being misled. Amen

**Day 72 (Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November)****Read Mark Chapter 13 verses 24 to 27**

## The Coming of the Son of Man

The suffering foretold by Christ in our previous reading will be followed by His return. There will be the incredible cosmic events of verses 24 & 25 that Isaiah had foretold and then Christ will come "with great power and glory". This will be completely different to His first coming. Then He came as the suffering servant in great humility. 'The Son of Man' was the name the Prophet Daniel had used when describing his vision of "one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven" who "was given dominion and glory and kingship"... "that shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 7.13&14). Christ used this name for Himself ( Mark 2.28). His elect (including us) will be gathered from everywhere.

## Questions to think about

1. Is the 'end of the age' something to look forward to?
2. Why might Christ have used the name 'Son of Man' rather than 'Son of God'?
3. Many great kingdoms, empires and powers have arisen on Earth. What has already happened to many of them?

## A Prayer you may wish to say

Heavenly Father thank you that you loved us enough to send Your Son to live in humility as one of us, to suffer and die for us. Thank you that we can look forward to seeing Him return in glory. Thank you that His Kingdom will last for ever and that you have saved us for that Kingdom. Amen

**Day 73 (Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November)****Read Mark Chapter 13 verses 28 to 31**

## The Lesson of the Fig Tree

Fig trees were one of the last to come into leaf. That event was a sure sign that summer was almost there. Jesus is emphasising the urgency of heeding His warnings. Different interpretations of verse 30 are possible. Jesus could have been talking then about His generation and the events leading up to the Fall of Jerusalem. What is certain is that this world will one day end but the Word of God will remain for ever.

## Questions to think about

1. How much of our time do we spend thinking about our present life? How often do we think about the next?
2. Some Bibles have Christ's word's printed in red. What advantages might that have?
3. Christ's hearers would have already heard Isaiah 40.8 "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever". Who is Christ saying He is in verse 31?

## A prayer you may wish to say

Lord, open our ears to the message of your Word. Help us as we grapple with the things which are hard to understand. Thank you that your Word will never fail and that we can trust it completely. Amen

**Day 74 (Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November)****Read Mark Chapter 13 verses 32 to 37**

## The Necessity for Watchfulness

Up until now, Christ has been referring broadly to 'those days'. Now, He turns to 'that day'. There is going to be a day of judgement. None of us knows when it will be, only God the Father who has set it. Christ tells us it will be like a master returning unexpectedly. Will He find his servants faithfully carrying out their duties? The story is not telling us to stop everything and just watch for the Master. Far from it. We are to continue doing our Master's work so that whenever He returns, He will find us doing so. It will not be our work that saves us on that day of course but Christ's. We just want to hear Him say "Well done, good and trustworthy slave" (Matthew 25.23).

## Questions to think about

1. If we are the 'slaves' in the story, what is the 'home' we are left in charge of? (verse 34)
2. What are we to understand by the 'work' that we should be doing?
3. If Christ were to return today, what would He see us doing?

## A Prayer you may wish to say

Master, whatever the tasks You have given me today, let me do them all to your glory and as if I am doing them for you. Show me how I can play my part in caring for your world and your people. Let me feel your presence with me during this day as I look forward to that Day when I will be with you face to face. Amen

**Day 75 (Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November)****Read Mark Chapter 14 verses 1 and 2**

## The Plot to kill Jesus

What happened at Passover takes up the last three chapters of Mark's Gospel. Passover And Unleavened Bread remains one of the most important Jewish festivals today. It commemorates God's deliverance of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. God told them to put the blood of a sacrificed lamb over their doors so that they were not touched by the death that came to Egypt. They were told to eat it with unleavened bread, ready to leave. That Christ's death occurred at Passover time is highly symbolic. The authorities didn't want Him killed then: they feared that with the city full of people, there might be a riot.

## Questions to think about

1. Without Christ we are enslaved to a life of sin and the death that follows it. Who is our Passover lamb?
2. Like the Israelites that first Passover night, we need to be prepared to leave that life of sin. Like them, what do we have to put our trust in?
3. Why does Mark devote so much space to the events around Christ's death?

## A Prayer you may wish to say

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

**Day 76 (Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November)****Read Mark Chapter 14 verses 3 to 9**

## The Anointing at Bethany

The woman here has not even been named. In John's Gospel we read she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. She alone seems to have realised what Jesus was about to do and anointed his body for burial. She lavishly expressed her love for the Lord: three hundred denarii was almost a year's wages. The fragrance of the ointment would have filled the room, much like the fragrance of the Gospel filling the world. Others criticized her, but she had done it for Christ and not to impress them.

## Questions to think about

1. Are there things we do to impress other people?
2. Do we criticize what others do when they do them out of love for Christ?
3. Is Christ's commendation enough for us?

## A Prayer you may wish to say

Lord, show us now how we can show your kindness to the poor. Help us to spread the fragrance of your Gospel to those around us and help us to do things out of love for you rather than anything else. Amen

**Day 77 (Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November)**

**Read Mark chapter 14 verses 10 to 11**

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

Judas is contrasted with Mary. Whatever ideas he had had, Jesus had disappointed him. Judas did not want a suffering servant in charge of his life. By agreeing to betray Jesus, he solved the authorities' problem of how to arrest Jesus quietly when he wasn't surrounded by the crowds. Maybe he was tempted by the lure of money. Maybe he had been one of those who had self-righteously said Mary's money should have been given to the poor and had felt stung by Christ's reproof. Thirty pieces of silver (the amount is given in Matthew's Gospel) was the price that had to be paid in the Law if your ox gored someone's slave to death (Exodus 21.32).

Questions to think about

1. Are we seeking to be the people Jesus wants or seeking for Jesus to be the person we want?
2. What is our reaction when we have been shown we have done something wrong?
3. The price put on Christ's head was that of a slave. What value did He put on ours?

A Prayer you may wish to say

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.                    (If you can, substitute 'shall have' for 'demands')