

FOLLOW ME #23 Mark 13

As Clear as Mud: *Faith in the Midst of Mystery*

A handmade Oriental rug is a treasure, often passed down from generation to generation. But when the rug is rolled up underside facing out, the treasure is veiled. You can still see the rug, but all you can make out are knots and dull colors, without any pattern. Like the underside of an oriental rug, the 13th chapter of Mark is mystifying. To the disciples, Jesus' teaching is puzzling...and to us it remains puzzling. But God has artistically woven together the fabric of what is to come, and one day all of these things will be made clear and we will see the unveiled treasure of Jesus' return.



One prominent theologian says of Mark 13: *"A confession of ignorance about the precise significance of some of these statements is nothing of which to be ashamed."*

When approaching any Bible passage, what interpretive principles do we need to keep in mind? (Hermeneutics)

- "The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things."
- Study Scripture in the light of the rest of Scripture.
- Prophecy often has a near and a far fulfillment.
- God's revelation to us is given to be practical, not theoretical.
- God's Word is infallible. But no individual's interpretation is infallible.
- Have humility.

Beyond the temple Mk 13:1-4 (Mt. 24:1-3)

As Jewish men, the disciples still viewed the Temple as the epicenter of Jewish life, the place to encounter God and be cleansed of sin. A passing comment by one of the disciples about the breathtaking majesty of the Temple provides an opportunity for Jesus to speak about future events.



The disciples asked, *when* will these things happen? How would Jesus have answered if they asked, *why* will these things happen?

The Tour of the future Mk 13:5-27 (Jn 13:19, 16:1-4; Col. 1:16-18)

Jesus' answer to the disciple's question reads like a movie trailer. Betrayal, deceit, wars, earthquakes, the Hero coming to save the day. Jesus' words are challenging and some are difficult for them to comprehend. But it seems that His heart in sharing these things is to reassure them. **How might this be reassuring to the disciples and to us? What warnings does Jesus repeat (5,9,23,33,35,37)? What can we confidently say after reading this passage? How would I summarize this passage as a bumper sticker?**



So what...now what? 2Peter 3:1-18

Peter was probably puzzled when hearing Jesus say these words. But after experiencing some tribulation in his lifetime and after decades of faithfully following the way of Jesus, notice what he emphasizes about the last days in his final letter to the church. **How does knowing some future realities impact my present living?**

