

Mark 13:14-20 – Difficulties for Christians When God Destroys the Jews

TSK, Henry, GreekLexicon, Clarke, JFB, Rienecker, DeMar, Gill, Robertson, Geneva, Vincent, Trapp, Family, Clarke, Barnes, Poole, Calvin?
Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: The Lord had to destroy the Jewish order because they had continually sinned, **killing his prophets** from Abel to Zechariah, and rejecting his message. And the Jews would not repent. To make matters worse, they **kept people from coming into the kingdom**. They even tried many times to **kill the Son of God (and eventually did)**. And then they would come after Christians to destroy them – imprisoning and killing some. So Christ pronounced judgment on them –severe judgment. Judgment they did not believe would come on them. He pronounced total destruction of Jerusalem.

But as God destroyed the Jews, for the Romans were coming, **his people would temporarily have to endure some difficulties**. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

God’s people would have to flee

God’s people would have to flee under harsh conditions

God’s people wouldn’t have to flee forever

Our goals are: **That you will understand that though you sometimes have to go through difficulties, that those difficulties are ultimately a refining fire, and they will help you to love God better.**

God’s people would Flee

14 "So when you see the ‘**abomination of desolation**,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (**let the reader understand**), "then **let those who are in Judea flee** to the mountains.

1. You will have to flee Jerusalem and go to the mountains to be safe when the “abomination of desolation” appears.

So what is the “abomination of desolation?” You have to learn this from Daniel.

First, God made the Jewish temple desolate when the Babylonians invaded because of the Jewish sins. The Babylonians set up their abominable gods and stopped the worship of Jehovah. **Remember how all the holy things were abused by Belshazzar?**

Second, God made the temple desolate during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes when the Jews had stopped worshipping properly. **God allowed Antiochus to sacrifice pigs in the temple and made it abominable.** The Jews never used that altar again. Daniel spoke of the work of Antiochus.

Daniel 11:31 "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there **the abomination of desolation.**

Third, back to our text, God would make the temple desolate when the Romans would bring their idolatrous, **abominable**, ensigns on their flags (of golden eagles), and even

images of their Caesar and set them up in and around the temple.

Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be **seven weeks** and **sixty-two weeks**... 27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; **But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.** And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, **Is poured out on the desolate.**"

This 70th week of Daniel's prophecy was marked **by a split of 3 ½ day years.** The first 3 ½ days of years, was the time of Jesus' ministry. It ended with a sacrifice, the sacrifice of Jesus. The 2nd 3 ½ day of years was the time of the siege of Jerusalem. That is what we are talking about here.

Daniel 12:11 "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be **one thousand two hundred and ninety days.**

The siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was approximately 3 ½ years, from AD66 to AD70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. So this was a hard time for God's people. **Fourth, Luke made the direct link between the siege of Jerusalem** and the abomination which causes desolation.

Luke 21:20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then **know that its desolation is near.**

And Mark urges his reads to pay attention and understand this meaning – **as it would be a life and death situation!**

So the abomination which causes desolation was a desecration of the temple that caused it to be desolate.

15 "Let him who is **on the housetop not go down** into the house, **nor enter to take anything** out of his house.

2. You will have to actively run, run from one building to another (the roofs were flat), and not take any of your conveniences.

The danger will be so great, you will not even bother to get water...

Obviously this was not speaking of Jesus' 2nd coming. When Jesus returns, it will not matter if we are on our housetop or not, or whether we are trapped in a basement apartment. **You will be taken up (passive) to be with Jesus in the air. Your bodies will be changed. (passive).** (Historic records show that a Roman military leader named Cestius Gallus who had besieged Jerusalem, all of a sudden, without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken. **This provided an opportunity for**

Christians who remained to make their escape. Historian Josephus wrote that Christians went over to the Jordan to Pella. There they were safe.

16 "And let him who is in the field not **go back to get his clothes.**

3. You will have to leave your clothes behind, even considering that clothes were a valuable commodity.

In the hot fields of Palestine **workers did not usually wear a lot of clothes in the fields,** but people would often sleep in their clothes to keep warm in the cold desert nights. But because of the urgency of the situation, they were not even to try to get their clothes.

So this could not refer to Jesus coming at the end of the world. At the end of the world, if we were in the field, we would be taken up (passive) and we will not care about earthly clothes. We will not have earthly bodies any longer. Your cashmere sweaters will mean nothing. If you were running away to save your lives, you will leave even cashmere behind.

4. Lessons:

a. General application: Some issues are a matter of spiritual life and death. Do you and your children know life and death issues? Do you love your parents or child enough to talk about life and death matters? Sin means death! Grace means life!

b. Specifically now: Many are bringing into the church abominable practices, even as the Romans AND the Jews did. The Jews made God's house into a house of merchandise. That was abominable to the Lord that he turned over their tables and beat them with a corded whip. Are you bringing in abominable things as well?

c. If you bring abominable things in to the church it will become desolate – empty of meaningful worship.

God's people would flee under harsh conditions

17 "But woe to **those who are pregnant** and to **those who are nursing** babies in those days!

1. You will have difficulty if you are pregnant or nursing babies.

The trauma of running while pregnant is apparent. Carrying nursing, and crying babies, with no water to drink to produce milk for that baby – and no Walmart on the horizon, was an extremely frustrating thing. A crying baby can be more frustrating than personal hunger. And yet, a mother wouldn't leave her children knowing they would surely die.

Surely this couldn't possibly be referring to the end of the world as there would be no inconveniences in heaven!

18 "And **pray** that your **flight may not be in winter.**

2. You will have difficulty if the Romans came in the middle of winter and had to flee, so pray, pray for 30 years for this!

It was cold day and night! The roads were bad. The days were short. And **surely this was**

not referring to Jesus' 2nd coming, as no Christian will flee when Jesus returns and winter wouldn't matter.

3. Matthew added that you will have difficulty if you have to leave on the Sabbath as no one would help someone they thought was a Sabbath breaker.

The Jews did not believe in Jesus, but they did hold to a literal observance of the law. So if they suspected that Christians were going more than a "Sabbath's Day journey" (about 2000 steps) they would not help them. But since Mark was writing to the Gentiles, he likely avoided warning.

19 "For in those days **there will be tribulation**, such as has **not been since the beginning** of the creation which God created until this time, **nor ever shall be.**

4. The difficulties would be so great that no one would have ever seen anything so bad before.

Sodom and Gomorrah were burned with **fiery sulfur**. The Assyrians were **baby-skull-crushers**. (Hosea 13:16) The Babylonians **were savages**. But these instances would not compare to the tribulation that was coming. **The evil of the Romans** would lay siege on Jerusalem and cruelly watch them suffer.

Then there would be the fury of the Jewish Zealots. They would be seditions. There would be **ravages with the sword with much bloodshed**. The Romans would kill 5000 men one day and throw their bodies in the lake so they it would turn literally red. There were **dreadful plagues and famines**. A total of 1,100,000 Jews were killed and 97,000 taken as slaves.

The reasons the Lord described the tribulation is to make sure that his people fled when they had to and did not delay! This was true love! One warning wasn't enough. He wanted to protect his children.

5. Lessons:

a. See what happens when you reject the Son of God and the forgiveness he offers.

Take warning from the failure of the Jews.

b. And yet, be thankful that the exclusion of the Jews marked the inclusion of the Gentiles in fulness.

c. The thing to note is that the tribulations that the Jews faced were only a token of that which was waiting for those who were going to spend eternity in hell. Be warned.

Save others from this calamity.

God's people wouldn't have to flee forever

20 "And **unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh** would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, **He shortened the days.**

1. God would help the some Jews (This was not referring to Christians.) to survive through

the hardship, hardships that were enough to kill!

God would do this because **he wanted them to be able to record and speak of what he had done.** This would still open the door for the Jews to return. That was God's promise.

Romans 11:23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, **how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?**

The early ending of the siege would also **help the Christians who were hiding in Pella to survive.**

2. And all these things would take place in that generation.

Matthew 16:28 "Assuredly, I say to you, **there are some standing here** who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Matthew 24:34 "Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation** will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

In Deuteronomy Moses used the term "generation" to refer to 38 years. It would be illogical to take "generation" here to mean more 2 two thousand plus years. Further, who is alive then who is alive today? Everyone would have tasted death from that time.

3. Lessons:

a. God hates sin so much that he would destroy his own covenant nation for it.

Romans 11:22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. **Otherwise you also will be cut off.**

If God would destroy the Jews, his original covenant people, wouldn't he do the same to Gentiles, the wild people? So take serious warning!

b. You have to admit that the church today has strayed and gone far away from the Lord. You see a Christianity being **relegated to health** (get detoxed and have clean colons) and **wealth** (get as much money as you can). You see Christianity being reduced to **imitating good behavior** without showing the need for a change in heart – faith and repentance. So we must beware!

c. God still holds open the door for any sinner, no matter how far he has gone, to return home. You must call the straying church to repent. You must pray for it. You must support it. You must work for it.

Conclusion:

Jesus rejected the Jews and sentenced them to destruction because they rejected him and persecuted his people. But as God was meting out justice on the Jews, there were some difficulties for Christians. They had to flee Jerusalem to Pella under harsh circumstances. And yet, God ended the siege in order to protect his people.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. While you Gentiles have been included in the kingdom, **don't take for granted your position as the Jews did**. If Jesus destroyed the Jews, he would destroy the Gentiles as well.
2. Instead, **work to build the kingdom**. **Follow the rules** of the kingdom. **Support the kingdom**.
3. **Remember the price of your inclusion in the kingdom: The blood of the Savior**...the one who endured the torturous and humiliating death on the cross. **If you forget this, you will treat your position with contempt!**

Finally, if you are not a Christian, you are in mortal danger. You just a pawn that the Devil will use and deposit in hell when he is done. Why not call on the Savior, Jesus Christ, to take you from the clutches of the Devil. He will do so! Jesus will plead his blood as your blood and his Father will let you into his kingdom!