



## 4 more studies from the Book of Mark (Part 6)

### Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to answer the Bible Study Questions before meeting together for the Bible Study. Some people like to prepare beforehand whereas others like to think through the Bible Passages in a group setting. It is also not compulsory to answer ALL the questions.
2. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
3. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP**

**Study 1 – Recognizing the True King and Rejecting False Religion**      **Mark 12:35-40**  
*(Sermon on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2026)*

**To begin with:** What does *Messiah* mean?

*Messiah* (Hebrew *Mashiach* and Greek *Christos*) means “**Anointed One.**”

In the Old Testament it refers to someone set apart by God—especially kings. By Jesus’ time it had come to mean **God’s promised King from David’s line who would bring salvation and rule God’s people.**

**Read Mark 12:35-37**

1. Where is Jesus’ teaching and why is this context important?

*Jesus is teaching in the temple courts in Jerusalem, during the final week before His crucifixion.*

*This is important because:*

- *The temple is the centre of Jewish religious authority*
- *Jesus is publicly confronting official teaching*
- *These are His final teachings before the cross*

2. What common understanding about the Messiah does Jesus refer to in verse 35?

*That **the Messiah is the son (descendant) of David**—a human military king in David’s royal line.*

*Since Jesus is the Christ, He spoke of Himself here. With the questions of the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees to Jesus, they tried to trap Him. Jesus did not do the same in His questions to them; instead He got to the heart of the matter: “Do you really know who I am?”*

*These religious leaders thought they knew just about everything there was to know about the Messiah. Jesus challenged this thought, and He asked them to consider that they may have something to learn.*

3. Which Old Testament passage does Jesus’ quote in verses 36 and 37?

*Jesus quotes from Psalm 110:1.*

4. Who is speaking in the Psalm Jesus quotes, and who is being addressed?

*Speaker: David*

*Addressed: “My Lord” — the Messiah*

*The other speaker: “The LORD” (Yahweh) speaking to David’s Lord, the Messiah!*

5. Why is it surprising that David calls the Messiah “my Lord”?

*Because:*

- *In ancient culture, **ancestors outranked descendants***
- *A father would never call his son “Lord”*
- *David was Israel’s greatest king—yet he submits to the Messiah*

6. What problem does Jesus raise with the idea that the Messiah is only David’s son in verse 37?

*If the Messiah is merely David’s descendant, **why does David call him “Lord”?***

*Jesus exposes the inadequacy of a purely human view of the Messiah.*

7. What does this reveal about the Messiah’s status and authority?

*The Messiah:*

- *Is **greater than David***
- *Has **divine authority***
- *Shares in **God’s rule and reign***

*Jesus is not only the Son of David but also the **Lord** of David. As Revelation 22:16 says, He is both the **root and offspring of David**. With this question Jesus challenged the religious leaders, asking them “do you understand this truth about the Messiah?”*

8. **Ponder:** Is there a hint here that Jesus is more than a political or earthly King?

*Yes, there is more than a hint...*

*Sitting at God’s right-hand points to:*

- *Heavenly authority*
- *Divine rule*
- *An eternal kingship, not a political revolution*

9. How does **Psalm 110** help explain Jesus’ identity after the resurrection and ascension?

*Psalm 110 explains:*

- Jesus' **exaltation** after resurrection
- His **enthronement** at God's right hand
- His ongoing reign until all enemies are defeated

*This Psalm becomes one of the most quoted in the New Testament.*

10. **Ponder:** Is there a reason why this teaching about the Messiah comes just before Jesus is crucified?

*Yes, there is a reason why this teaching comes just before Jesus is crucified.*

*Jesus clarifies **who He truly is** before He dies:*

- He is not a failed Messiah
- He is not merely David's heir
- He is also David's Lord who will reign through His suffering and resurrection

11. What does it mean for Jesus to be both David's son and David's Lord?

*It points to Jesus' **two natures**:*

- **Human:** born in David's line
- **Divine:** exalted Lord over David

*This is a profound claim about Jesus' unique identity.*

12. Why do you think the crowd "listened to Him with delight"?

*Because:*

- Jesus teaches with clarity and authority
- Jesus exposes shallow religious thinking
- Jesus opens up Scripture in a new fresh and compelling way

13. How do the following Old Testament passages relate to **Mark 12:35-37**?

### **2 Samuel 7:12-16**

*In 2 Samuel 7:12-16 - God promises a **descendant of David will be a forever King of an everlasting kingdom**—which is fulfilled fully in Jesus.*

### **Psalm 2**

*Psalm 2 describes God's anointed King who rules all the nations of the world—pointing to Jesus, God's anointed one!*

### **Psalm 89:3-4, 19-29**

*These verses reaffirm the promise God made to King David of a forever King of a forever Kingdom*

### **Psalm 132:11-18**

*God's oath to David finds its ultimate fulfilment in the Messiah/The Christ, not merely in Israel's monarchy.*

### **Read Mark 12:38-40**

14. Who is Jesus warning the crowd about?

***The teachers of the law (the Scribes)**—they are religious leaders/teachers with authority.*

*The **scribes** were the “Bible Scholars” of Jesus’ day. They were entrusted with preserving, learning, and teaching the Word of God to the world. These were the men that the people of God should have been able to trust, but Jesus said instead they should **beware of the scribes**. The scribes represented a complete contrast to the picture of how a true disciple should be —a true disciple acts as a servant, as a child, and as one carrying a cross. Jesus said that we should notice what they do as well as what they say.*

15. What outward behaviours does Jesus point out here?

- *Wearing long robes*
- *Seeking public recognition by being greeted with respect*
- *Wanting most important seats in the synagogue and seats of honour at banquets*
- *Enjoying visible religious status*

16. What motivates these teachers of the law, according to Jesus?

***Love of honour, status, and admiration**, not love for God or love for people.*

17. What serious injustice does Jesus accuse them of in verse 40?

*They **devour widows' houses**—exploiting the vulnerable for personal gain.*

*They sinned against the weak and vulnerable but excused it because they thought they were so spiritual. In that day, a Jewish teacher could not be paid for teaching — but he could receive gifts. Apparently, many scribes used flattery and manipulation to wrangle big gifts from those who could least afford to give them — such as widows. The Jews of Jesus' day taught that teachers were to be respected almost as much as God; they said that they deserved more honor and respect than any other people in life. They taught that the greatest act someone could do was to give money to a teacher. Of course, it was the teachers themselves who taught this.*

18. Why is their prayer especially condemned?

*Because it is: **Long, Public, full of Pretence**. Their prayers are used to mask their greed and oppression. Their prayers are a performance!*

*Their relationship with God was far more show than substance. The scribes thought they were more spiritual because of their long prayers. But G. Campbell Morgan wrote that when a man is away from his wife and the journey is short, the letters are short. The farther he is from his wife, the longer the letters become. **Morgan said that some people must be a long way from God because their prayers are so long.***

19. **Ponder:** Why does Jesus say they will be “**most severely punished**”?

Because:

- *They knew the Scriptures but didn't follow it and should have known better*
- *They were leading people astray*
- *They held spiritual authority but abused their authority*
- *They abused trust and harmed the vulnerable by taking advantage of them and they were dishonest*
- *Their greater responsibility came with greater accountability*
- *They were glorifying themselves; rather than glorifying God*

20. **Ponder:** Does this passage have anything to say about hypocrisy?

*Yes—religious hypocrisy is **especially offensive to God** when it: looks holy, sounds spiritual, but exploits others*

21. In what ways can religious activity become performance rather than devotion?
- *When outward appearance matters more than obedience to God*
  - *When prayer is for approval, not communion with God*
  - *When leadership seeks status and accolades rather than service*
  - *When people look for glory for themselves rather than giving God ALL the glory!*
22. How do the following Old Testament passages relate to **Mark 12:38-40**?

**Isaiah 29:13**

*Isaiah describes people who honour God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. This is just like the teachers of the Law in Mark 12:38-40. God does not want lip service!*

**Isaiah 1:11-17**

*In Isaiah 1, God does not want worship that consists of many animal sacrifices, burnt offerings and fancy prayers, from people who neglect to “**learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow**”. And this is what the Teachers of the Law are like in Mark 12 - they focus on themselves and their fancy seats and fancy prayers, and devouring the widows’ houses!*

**Ezekiel 34:1-4**

*Ezekiel condemns the leaders who exploit the flock instead of caring for them; which is precisely what the Teachers of the Law are doing in Mark 12.*

**Jeremiah 7:9-11**

*Jeremiah condemns the people in his day who are stealing, murdering, committing adultery, perjuring themselves and worship false gods like Baal – and then think they can come to the Lord’s House that bears His name – and think they are safe – and that will cover up their injustice. In addition, they have made God’s House that bears His name ‘a den of robbers’. But they can’t get away with it, because God is*

*watching (v11b). Something Jesus condemned when He visited the Temple!  
Likewise the Teachers of the Law are robbing the widows!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Mark 12:35-40**

Jesus is not merely David's son but David's Lord—and true submission to Him is revealed not in outward religion but in humble, righteous devotion.

OR

The true Messiah reigns with divine authority, and false religion is exposed by self-serving hypocrisy

OR

Recognizing the Messiah and following His example!



What light globe moment did you have?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**V36-David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared: “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”**

**Finish in prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank you that Jesus is Lord, exalted at your right hand. Forgive us when we seek honour for ourselves or neglect those in need. Give us humble hearts that serve you faithfully, love the vulnerable, and honour your Word in all we do. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

## Study 2 – Giving from the Heart

Mark 12:41-44

*(Sermon on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026)*

### Read Mark 12:41-44

1. Where is Jesus sitting, and what does He notice?

*Jesus is sitting **opposite the temple treasury**, where people place their offerings. He deliberately **watches how people give**, noticing not just the amount, but **the heart behind the gift**.*

*The line at the offering box and the pride shown by the rich men in their giving shows us that it isn't necessarily more spiritual to have an offering box instead of passing offering bags. It isn't a matter of right and wrong, but a matter of which is an easier way for people to give in a way that doesn't attract attention to their gifts (Guzik) Jesus looks at us when we give and He notices how we give. As Jesus looks, He is more interested in **how** we give than in **how much** we give. In seeing **how** the people gave, Jesus wasn't studying technique. He looks more at **motive and heart**. Jesus noticed a long line of rich people who put in a lot of money, perhaps making some kind of showy display to call attention to their gifts. A poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. (Guzik)*



2. What does Jesus say about the widow's gift?

*i. Mark tells us that two mites make one quadrans. Matthew Poole says that we can calculate the value of a mite based on the value of a denarius, which was the going*

rate of one day's labor for a working man. According to Poole's calculations, a denarius equals six meahs; one meah equals two pondions; one pondion equals two issarines; one issarine equals eight mites. When you figure it all out, two mites are 1% of a denarius. A mite was pretty small — perhaps our equivalent of putting \$1 in the collection plate.

ii. A quadrans was a Roman coin. Mark helped his Roman readers to understand how much a mite was worth. It wasn't worth much.

V42 footnote: Greek two lepta, which make a kodrantes; kodrantes (Latin quadrans) was a Roman copper coin worth about 1/64 of a denarius (which was a day's wage for a laborer)

iii. The ancient Greek word lepton literally means "a tiny thing," and so in the Old English was translated **mite**, which comes from the word for a "crumb" or "very small morsel."

Jesus did not say that she put in more than any one of them; He said that she put in more than **all** of them — **all of them put together**.

3. Why does Jesus value the widow's offering more than the large sums of others?

She gave **all she had to live on**, showing total trust in God.

**They all put in out of their wealth (abundance), but she out of her poverty put in all that she had:** This explains how Jesus could say that the widow **put in more than all**. It was because all the others gave out of **their abundance** but she gave sacrificially.

She gave **all she had to live on**, showing total trust in God.

The wonderful thing about this widow's giving was that she had **two mites** and gave them both. She might have kept one coin for herself, and no one would blame her if she did. Instead, she gave with staggering generosity.

4. **Ponder:** What does this teach us about God's perspective on giving?

God measures giving **by sacrifice and trust**, not by size or visibility.

What matters most to God is **the heart, not the amount**.

i. Jesus' principle here shows us that before God, **the spirit of giving determines the value of the gift more than the amount**. God doesn't want grudgingly given money or guilt money. **God loves the cheerful giver**.

ii. The widow's gift and Jesus' comment on it also shows us that **the value of a gift is determined by what it costs the giver**. This is what made the widow's gift so valuable. David refused to give God that which cost me nothing (2 Samuel 24:24).

iii. Jesus' principle here shows us that God does not need our money. If God needed our money, then how much we give would be more important than our heart in giving. Instead, it is our privilege to give to Him, and **we need to give because it is good for us, not because it is good for God**.

**This is the sort of giving Jesus gives at the Cross at Calvary!**

We will see another example of this giving in Mark 14:3 when a woman smashed an alabaster jar of expensive perfume for Jesus' sake.

**The rich people gave a contribution [and probably a large amount] – but the widow gave her all. God doesn't want our contributions – He wants our lives!**

5. How does the widow demonstrate faith?

She entrusts her **entire livelihood to God**, believing He will provide.

Her giving is an act of **dependence, not security**.

**The woman was poor because she was a widow and had no husband to help support her**. It also may be significant that **Jesus had just criticized the scribes/teachers of the law for devouring widow's houses**. Then a lone widow made a spectacular contribution. Perhaps a scribe devoured her house.

6. How could we give sacrificially today, even if we have little?

- Giving consistently, even when finances are tight
- Giving time, prayer, hospitality, or care
- Choosing generosity that costs us time, comfort, convenience, or control
- **Sacrifice is about cost, not quantity.**

The widow challenged the mindset that says, "I'll give when I have more." The widow had virtually nothing yet was a giver. This means that we can all please God with our giving just as much as the richest man can please God with his giving. Whatever we give sacrificially to God, He sees it and is pleased (Guzik)

7. What does this story teach about humility in giving?

*True generosity is often **quiet and unseen**.*

*The widow seeks **no recognition**, yet receives Jesus' highest praise.*

*In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: **But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing** (Matthew 6:3)*

8. **Ponder:** How might we be tempted to give “for show” instead of faith, and how can we guard against it?

**Temptations to give “for show”:**

- *Wanting approval or recognition or accolades*
- *Comparing our giving to other people's giving*
- *Giving publicly but not sacrificially*

**Ways to Guards being “for show”:**

- *Giving anonymously*
- *Praying before giving*
- *Asking: “Does this giving actually cost me anything?”*

9 **Ponder:** What is one way you can give with a “**widow's heart**” this week — fully trusting God and not seeking recognition?

**Examples:**

- *A quiet act of generosity no one else knows about*
- *Giving time to someone who can be difficult*
- *Giving time which means you miss something you enjoy*
- *Trusting God by giving when it feels risky*
- *Serving without thanks or acknowledgment*

10. How do the following Old Testament passages relate to **Mark 12:35-37**?

**Proverbs 3:9-10**

*Honouring God with our wealth and **firstfruits** — giving God priority, not leftovers. God should be the first priority when it comes to the use of our time, talents and wealth.*

**Deuteronomy 16:17**

*Each person gives **according to what they have**, reinforcing **proportional**, not **equal**, giving.*

**1 Samuel 2:1-10**

*In Hannah's prayer she tell us that God lifts the humble and needy and humbles the proud — the widow fits God's pattern.*

**Exodus 22:22-24**

*Exodus 22:22-24 establishes that:*

- *Widows are especially vulnerable*
- *God takes their treatment personally*
- *God hears their cry and acts in judgment against those who exploit them*

*So when Mark tells us a widow is present, this should sound an alarm that this is important to God as Exodus 22 tells us!*

**Psalm 41:1-3**

*Blessing is promised to those who care for the poor [including the widow], aligning with God's heart for the widow.*

**Leviticus 27:30-32**

*Everything belongs to the Lord — so our giving acknowledges **God's ownership**, not ours.*

**Malachi 3:8-10**

*In these verses from Malachi, God accuses the people of holding back on God, even robbing Him! So God calls His people to **faithful giving**, trusting in God's provision. That's precisely what the widow did in Mark 12, when she gave all she had*

**2 Kings 12:9-10**

*This passage in 2 Kings 12 shows the origin and historical context of the giving place that Jesus is observing in Mark 12.*

## Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

11. How might this passage relate to **Mark 12:41-44**?

*Both passages teach that:*

- God values **willing, joyful, and trusting** giving
- Generosity flows from **faith**, not abundance
- God is the one who **supplies and multiplies**, not the giver

*The widow demonstrates this principle perfectly.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Mark 12:41-44**

**God wants us to give from the heart – He's interested in the INSIDE, not the OUTSIDE!**



**What light globe moment did you have?**

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

***<sup>43</sup> Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others."***

**Finish in prayer:** Heavenly Father, we thank You for teaching us through the example of the widow. Help us to give with faith, trusting You completely, and to serve You with hearts fully devoted, not for show, but from love and dependence on You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Study 3 – Watchful and Faithful: Following Jesus in Troubled Times Mark 13:1-23**  
*(Sermon on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026)*

**Read Mark 13:1-23**

1. What prompts Jesus' teaching in this chapter (verses 1&2)?

*As they leave the temple, one disciple marvels at its **size and beauty**. Jesus responds by predicting the **total destruction of the temple** — not one stone left on another. Jesus's statement is prompted by their **confidence in religious structures** — and He proclaims judgment on the temple because of the people of Jerusalem's rejection of Him as the Messiah!*

*The disciples seemed like tourists amazed at the sites of the city of Jerusalem. They had good reason to be amazed, because the temple compound, as remodelled by Herod the Great, was one of the magnificent structures of the ancient world. The Jewish people were justifiably proud of this great building.*

*i. This temple was originally rebuilt by Zerubbabel and Ezra (Ezra 6:15) but greatly expanded and improved by Herod. It was the centre of Jewish life for almost 1,000 years — so much so, that it was customary to swear by the temple (Matthew 23:16) and speaking against the temple could be considered blasphemy (Acts 6:13).*

*ii. After Herod's work, the temple was huge — nearly 500 yards long and 400 yards wide. Herod's rebuilding started in 19 B.C., and was not completed until A.D. 63, taking more than 80 years. The magnificent temple compound was finished only seven years before it was destroyed.*

*iii. The beauty of the ancient temple is well documented. The Jewish historian Josephus says that the temple was covered on the outside with gold plates that were so brilliant that when the sun shone it was blinding. Where there wasn't gold, there were blocks of marble of such a pure white that from a distance, strangers thought there was snow on the temple.*

*As great as the temple was, **Jesus never hesitated to claim that He was greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6)**. For many Jews of that day, the temple had become an idol — it subtly began to mean more to the people than God Himself meant. **The temple was a good thing, but good things can become the worst idols. Sometimes God sours even good things if we allow them to become our idols.***

Some 40 years after Jesus said this there was a widespread Jewish revolution against the Romans in Palestine, and the rebels enjoyed many early successes. But ultimately, Rome crushed the Jews of that day. Jerusalem was levelled, including the temple — just as Jesus said.

i. It is said that at the fall of Jerusalem, the last surviving Jews of the city fled to the temple because it was the strongest and most secure building remaining. Roman soldiers surrounded it, and one drunken soldier started a fire that soon engulfed the whole building. Ornate gold detail work in the roof melted down in the cracks between the stone walls of the temple. To retrieve the gold, the Roman commander ordered that the temple be dismantled stone by stone. The destruction was so complete that today researchers have some difficulty learning exactly where the temple was.

ii. “Now, as soon as the army had no more people to kill or plunder... Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple... this was the end which Jerusalem came to.” (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, 7.1.1) Interestingly, Josephus tells us that the Romans never intended to destroy the temple but were driven to it by the fierceness of Jewish opposition and by accident. (Wars of the Jews, 6.4)

iii. The literal fulfillment of this prophecy establishes the tone for the rest of the prophecies in the chapter. We should expect a literal fulfillment for these other prophecies also.

2. What question do the disciples ask in verse 4?

They ask **two connected questions**:

- When will these things happen?
- What will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled?

They want **timing and signs**, not theology.

These questions were asked perhaps as they remembered the events surrounding the last temple's destruction: the temple was destroyed in the context of national judgment and exile. If the temple is to be destroyed again, then what will become of Israel and the Jews?

3. What is the first warning Jesus gives (verse 5)?

**“Watch out that no one deceives you.”**

Before talking about suffering or signs, Jesus warns about **deception** — especially religious deception.

4. Why does Jesus say wars, earthquakes, and famines are not the end (verses 7&8)?

Because they are:

- **Normal features of a fallen world**
- **“Birth pains”, not the birth itself - The idea is both of giving birth to a new age, and perhaps implying an increase of intensity and frequency in these calamities.**

People living through WWI or WWII or in the Ukraine or Gaza today, might feel like this in the end of the world! Turmoil does not automatically mean the end. God’s plan is unfolding, not unravelling.

5. What does Jesus say will happen to His followers (verses 9 to 13)?

They will:

- **Be arrested, flogged and put on trial**
- **Be betrayed by family**
- **Be hated because of Jesus**
- **Be given words by the Holy Spirit – there is great comfort in this!**

Their faithfulness will be a **witness to others through their suffering**, not through their comfort. Jesus also promised that before the end **the gospel must go out to the whole world**. The presence of persecution does not relieve the Church of this responsibility.

A powerful example of this principle is found in Acts 4:1-22, where Peter and the other disciples made a dramatic proclamation of Jesus before the hostile Sanhedrin.

It is easy for us to underestimate how difficult a time of persecution can be. While few Christians in the Western world face persecution, Christians in other parts of the world often face these trials.

- *If I came from an orthodox Jewish family, they might consider me a blasphemer and account me as dead for choosing Jesus.*
- *If I came from a strict Muslim family, I might be rejected by my family and be literally killed for choosing Jesus.*

- *If I came from a Hindu family in India, I could be rejected and martyred for choosing Jesus.*
- *In China, I would be allowed to practice Christianity only in the state-sponsored church — or be persecuted. My church might be one of the 1,500 destroyed or shut down since November of 2000.*
- *In Sudan, I might be killed or literally enslaved by a Muslim army.*
- *In Indonesia, I might be given a choice by Muslims: convert to Islam or die, or I might have my church bombed during a worship service.*
- *In Pakistan, I might be jailed by Muslim government officials.*

*Researchers estimate that since the Day of Pentecost, more than 43 million Christians have been killed for their faith. A persecution index provided by Open Doors with Brother Andrew listed 28 countries with strong or massive persecution. In another 23 countries, Christians suffer discrimination and, in some regions, severe harassment.*

6. What promise is given to those who endure (verse 13)?

***“The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”***

*Salvation is promised to – not for spectacular actions, but for **faithfully enduring**.*

7. What does **“the abomination that causes desolation”** refer to (verse 14)?

*Jesus is deliberately reaching back to the prophet **Daniel** — not just one verse, but a **pattern**.*

*Key passages:*

- ***Daniel 8:9–14*** – a desecrating power opposes God and profanes worship
- ***Daniel 9:26–27*** – destruction of the city and sanctuary
- ***Daniel 11:31*** – the “abomination that makes desolate” set up
- ***Daniel 12:11*** – abomination linked with end-time distress

*In Daniel, the “abomination” is:*

- ***A blasphemous intrusion in the place of worship - Signalling judgment and intense suffering - Followed by God’s ultimate deliverance***

*This abomination had already happened before Jesus’ time*

**Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167 BC)**

- Pagan altar in the temple*

- ii. *Sacrifice of pigs*
- iii. *First major historical “abomination”*

### **Jesus is also pointing forward to Roman destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70)**

- i. *Pagan flags/banners representing roman gods and worshipping the emperor as divine and allegiance to Rome and not God!*
- ii. *Desecration and destruction of the temple*
- iii. *Immediate fulfillment for Jesus’ disciples*

**But Jesus frames it in a way that *transcends one event*, turning it into a *recurring pattern*.**

Scripture presents the **“*abomination that causes desolation*”** as a ***recurring pattern*** that intensifies over time:

- ***False worship replaces true worship***
- ***Human or demonic power claims what belongs to God***
- ***God’s people face pressure to compromise***
- ***Judgment and deliverance follow***

This pattern appears:

- ***In Daniel***
- ***In AD 70***
- ***And climactically at the *end of the age****

### **The final expression: a personal embodiment**

*In the far future, the New Testament presents the abomination not just as an event, but as a **person** who embodies it.*

Key texts:

- ***2 Thessalonians 2:3–4*** – *“the man of lawlessness”*
- ***1 John 2:18*** – *“many antichrists have come... but a final one is coming”*
- ***Revelation 13*** – *a beast demanding worship*

The **final Antichrist** is the ultimate expression of the same Daniel/Mark pattern

There are **two views of the Temple in the future**:

- **Literal view**

- The Temple is rebuilt and temple worship restored
- There is a future desecration by the Antichrist against this restored temple worship

- **New Covenant view**

- God's people are seen as the temple (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:21)
- The Antichrist infiltrates, deceives, and corrupts from within the visible church

8 **Ponder:** Why does Jesus urge immediate action rather than delay (verses 15 to 18)?

*Because:*

- *Judgment will come **suddenly***
- *Hesitation could be **fatal***
- *This is not a time for debate, preparation, or sentimentality*

***It's like fleeing a house when there is a bushfire!***

9 What does Jesus say about the severity of this time (verses 19&20)

*It will be a time of **unmatched distress** so severe that **no one would survive** unless God intervened. As v20 says 'If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them'*

10. Why do you think Jesus repeats the warning about false Messiahs and false prophets (verses 21 to 23)

*Repetition is used in the Bible is used to emphasize how important it is. Con-men are con-men because they are good at it. When people are in a crisis they are desperate, and desperation makes people susceptible and gullible. These false Messiahs and false prophets will be persuasive, even convincing!*

11. **Ponder:** What does this passage teach about God's control over history?

- *World events are foreknown, not accidental*
- *Judgment is measured, not chaotic*
- *God sets limits on suffering*

- *Nothing thwarts God's redemptive plan*

12. How do the following Old Testament passages relate to **Mark 13:1-23**?

### **Daniel 9:25-27**

*Daniel 9:26-27 predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple —fulfilled by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (167 BC) – and also which is what Jesus' warns about in Mark 13:1-2 for the Roman invasion in AD70.*

#### **Seventy "Sevens" prophecy** (vv24-27)

- *"Sevens" can mean: a) seven; b) seven days or seven years; c) a heptad (set of seven) or d) a week.*
- *Most likely here seventy x seven years = 70 x 7 years = 490 years*
- *Is it literal or hyperbole or approximate?*
- *The seventy 'sevens' broken into 3 chunks*
  - *7 'sevens' = limited period of time*
  - *62 'sevens' = extended period of time*
  - *1 'seven' = climatical period of time*

#### **Seventy "Sevens" prophecy six-fold goal** (v24)

1. *To finish transgression*
2. *To put an end to sin*
3. *To atone for wickedness*
4. *To bring everlasting righteousness*
5. *To seal up vision and prophecy*
6. *To anoint the Most Holy Place (Temple)*

### **Seventy “Sevens” prophecy** (vv25-27)

- V25 – *Jerusalem and the temple rebuilt. This happened in Ezra/Nehemiah’s time*
- V26 – *The Anointed One put to death = Jesus’ death on the cross*
- V26 – *The ruler will come to destroy the city and temple. Already happened 3 times and will happen again in the future!*
- V27 – *This ruler (Antichrist) will come – but God has decreed an end for him!*

***Like the Israelites, Christians will face times of trouble too!***

### **Daniel 11:31**

*Daniel 11:31 also refers to this **abomination** that Jesus refers to Mark 13:10.*

### **Daniel 12:1**

*Daniel refers to a time of unprecedented distress, which Jesus mentions in Mark 13:19.*

### **Jeremiah 7:1-15**

*Jeremiah gives a Temple sermon warning: religious buildings do not protect unrepentant hearts. The people thought standing in the Temple made them holy. Jesus’ disciples were marvelling at the Temple; Jesus is more interested in hearts not buildings!*

### **Micah 3:12**

*Micah prophesied the Jerusalem would be destroyed because of corrupt leadership. It was fulfilled in 587BC by Nebuchadnezzar. It’s a pattern of what is to come. Jesus prophesied it would happen again in Mark 13:1-2.*

### **Lamentations 4:12**

*Jeremiah writes of the shock at Jerusalem’s fall — which reinforces just how unimaginable this judgment would seem. Jesus is saying the same thing.*

**Daniel 7:21, 25**

*Daniel has a vision of God's people being persecuted for a limited time — suffering has a divine boundary. Jesus says in Mark 13:20 that the Lord will cut short the suffering!*

**Isaiah 50:6-7**

*Isaiah says the faithful servant of God suffers but trusts God in that suffering — this is a good model for all disciples of Jesus as they face suffering.*

**Isaiah 49:6**

*God through Isaiah says that salvation extends beyond Israel, they are to be a light for the Gentiles — this points to what Jesus says in Mark 13:10 that — “the gospel must be preached to all nations first”.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Mark 13:1-23**

***When the world shakes and trouble comes, faithful endurance — not fear — marks the true people of God.***



**What light globe moment did you have?**

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

**V10 - And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.**

**V23 - So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.**

**Finish in prayer:** Faithful Father, when the world is unsettled, help us to trust your purposes. Keep us from fear and deception, give us strength to endure, and courage to bear witness to Christ. Teach us to be watchful, faithful, and steadfast, until the end. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Study 4 – Watchful until the Son of Man comes

Mark 13:24-37

*(Sermon on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2026)*

**Before we begin:** Summarise what happened in **Mark 13:1-23**?

*In verses 1 to 23, the disciples marvelled at the Temple buildings which were a master class building project by King Herod the Great, who extended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple (Zerubbabel's Temple rebuilt after return of the Jewish people from exile in 516BC). Despite such grandeur, Jesus prophesied the destruction of this Temple in Jerusalem. This happened in 7-AD, 40 years after Jesus died and rose and ascended to Heaven, when Roman general Titus invaded Jerusalem and razed the Temple and city. Jesus also picks up on a phrase from Daniel 9:24-27, namely "an abomination that causes desolation". Here Jesus is introducing pattern of suffering and persecution that recurs throughout history. The Temple was desecrated in 587BC (Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon); 167BC (by Seleucid Ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes); and 70AD (Roman, Titus) and there will be a final abomination at the end. In amongst all of this is a recurring pattern of suffering/persecutions, which God cuts short, and which at the same time the Gospel must be preached to all nations. Jesus warns to stand firm and not be deceived and to keep on believing, and we will be saved.*

*These sufferings/persecutions could be described as a **tribulation!***

*We concluded last week:*

- **Jesus is the Temple – a Spiritual temple** (John 2:19)
- **God's people are seen as a Holy Temple in the Lord – the worldwide Church** (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:21)
- **And at some point in the future - The Antichrist infiltrates, deceives, and corrupts from within the visible worldwide church**
- **We are living in a fallen, broken and troubled world – so, whatever we face as Christians, we have the promise Jesus gives in v13 of Mark 13 - **Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.****

### Read Mark 13:24-37

1. What major shift occurs in verse 24?

*A shift occurs from the **short-term tribulation surrounding Jerusalem's fall** (vv.1–23) to the **ultimate, cosmic return of Christ**. The language becomes global and cosmic rather than local and historical.*

2. What signs accompany the coming of the Son of Man (verses 24&25)?

*Jesus describes **cosmic disturbances**:*

- *Sun darkened*
- *Moon not giving light*
- *Stars falling*
- *Heavenly powers shaken*

*These echo Old Testament judgment imagery [Isaiah 13:10; 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7-9; Joel 2:30-31; Amos 8:9-10 and Zephaniah 1:14-15] and signal the climactic **Day of the Lord**.*

*Immediately before the return of Jesus, before His **coming in the clouds with great power and glory**, the world will be wracked by cosmic catastrophes. In a sense, this will be the groaning of all creation (Romans 8:22) and it will come to one last crescendo before the return of Jesus. (David Guzik)*

3. How is the Son of Man described in verse 26?

*He comes: “**in clouds**” and “**with great power and glory**”*

*This portrays a **visible, triumphant, divine arrival**, echoing Daniel’s vision of the exalted Son of Man.*

4. What does Jesus say He will do when He returns (verse 27)?

*Jesus will:*

- *Send out the angels*
- *Gather His elect*
- *From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven*

*This is the **final gathering of God’s people**, not merely a local rescue.*

*When Jesus returns to this earth **after that tribulation**, He will come with the saints in heaven and to **gather** those who have come to Jesus during the **tribulation** and have survived. (David Guzik)*

5. What lesson does Jesus teach from the fig tree (verses 28&29)?

Just as **budding leaves** show summer is near, observable signs show that Jesus' coming is near. Jesus' point is: Believers should be spiritually perceptive and discerning.

The **fig tree** has a regular pattern — the leaves appear and then summer follows. When you see the leaves, you know **summer is near**. In the same way, when these signs — particularly the abomination of desolation — appear, the world can know that the triumphant return of Jesus is **near; at the doors**. (David Guzik)

i. This is just as Daniel prophesied in Daniel 12:11: the end will come 1,290 days after the abomination of desolation. In this, Jesus assured that the agonies of the great tribulation would not continue indefinitely; they will have an end. Song of Solomon 2:11-13 also mentions the idea that the blossoming of the fig tree shows winter is past and summer is near.

ii. "In contrast to most of the trees of Palestine... the fig loses its leaves in the winter, and in contrast to the almond, which blossoms very early in the spring, the fig tree shows signs of life only later." (Lane)

iii. This was the perfect illustration at this time and place. Jesus taught this on the Mount of Olives, and "The Mount of Olives was famous for its fig trees, which sometimes attained a height of 20 or 30 feet." (Lane) It was also the perfect time, because Jesus taught this right before Passover, when fig trees were in the condition described in the parable — branches tender, leaves sprouting.

6. What does Jesus mean by "**this generation**" (verse 30)?

The generation of Jesus' listeners saw this partially fulfilled in 70AD.

But it's full fulfilment is the generation that sees the end-time signs and wonders Jesus' describes here. In other words it will not be a long time between the signs and the end — the final generation will not pass away before completion.

What **generation** did Jesus refer to? It cannot be the **generation** of the disciples because they did not see the triumphant return of Jesus. It is undoubtedly the **generation** that will see these signs — especially the abomination of desolation. It is also possible that the word **generation** can be understood as a race or people. This may be a promise that the Jewish race will not perish before history comes to a conclusion. (David Guzik)

7. What contrast does Jesus make in verse 31?

*Contrast between:*

- **Creation:** “Heaven and earth will pass away”
- **Christ’s words:** “My words will never pass away”

*Jesus is asserting the **absolute permanency and authority** of His teaching.*

*Jesus made the amazing claim of uttering eternal words. This is certainly enough to establish His claim to deity. (David Guzik)*

8. What does Jesus say about knowing the day or hour (verse 32)?

*No one knows: Not people; Not angels; Not even the Son (in His incarnate humility); Only the Father*

*Implication: Setting a date for Jesus’ return is ruled out; instead humility and readiness are required, in case we are unprepared!*

***If Jesus doesn’t know the day or hour; He doesn’t know the year either – so we must stop guessing!***

***Nor the Son, but only the Father:*** How could Jesus not know that day and hour? Did not He, as God, know all things? Jesus did not know this, but it was not because He gave up His omniscience — He is the unchanging God. It was because **He voluntarily, in submission to God the Father, restricted His knowledge of this event.**

9. What does “**watch**” mean in this passage (verses 33 to 37)

*“Watch” means:*

- *Staying spiritually alert*
- *Remaining faithful*
- *Living in readiness for Jesus’ return*
- *Continuing in obedience*

*It is **active vigilance**, not passive speculation.*

*Some people have the idea, “We don’t know when Jesus is coming, so it doesn’t really matter.” Others have the idea, “We don’t know when Jesus is coming, so we have to find out and set a date.” The right response is, “**I don’t know when Jesus is coming so I have to be alert, eager, and ready and prepared for His coming.**” (Guzik)*

10. How does the parable of the doorkeeper explain watchfulness?

*The master goes away and assigns work to his servants; the doorkeeper must stay alert because the master may return at any time.*

**Lesson:**

- *Jesus is the absent master*
- *Believers are entrusted servants*
- *His return is certain but unpredictable*
- *Faithfulness is proven in His absence*

*Think of what Jesus has left you:*

- **His house:** *The church belongs to Jesus, but He entrusts it to each one of us.*
- **His authority:** *We are to live and serve in the **authority** of Jesus, and responsibility is always coupled with **authority**.*
- **His work:** *Each servant has **his work** to do. We aren't responsible for someone else's work, but we certainly are responsible for ours.*

**11. Ponder:** How should Jesus' return shape everyday Christian living?

*It should produce:*

- *Faithful obedience*
- *Urgency in mission*
- *Perseverance in trials*
- *Moral purity*
- *Hope rather than fear*

**12.** Why is watchfulness a communal command, not just individual (verse 37)?

*Reasons:*

- *The church watches together*
- *We guard one another from drifting*
- *We encourage perseverance*
- *We maintain corporate readiness*

*This fits beautifully with your pastoral emphasis on church life.*

**13. Reflection:** What does “**watching**” look like in your life right now — in prayer, obedience, or service?

*Practically, “**watching**” looks like:*

***In prayer***

- *Praying regularly in submission and dependence on God*
- *Praying with alert intercession – to be prepared for Jesus’ coming*

***In obedience***

- *Daily repentance*
- *Faithful holiness*
- *Billy Graham lived each day as if Jesus was returning tomorrow!*

***In service***

- *Using our God-given gifts faithfully*
- *Continually sharing the Gospel Good News of Jesus as faithful witnesses*
- *Caring for others*

14. What helps Christians avoid deception today?

***Key safeguards:***

- *Deep grounding in Scripture*
- *Clear doctrine about Christ’s return*
- *Discernment about false teachers*
- *Life in a healthy church community*
- *Prayerful dependence on the Spirit*

15. What does this passage say to Christians facing opposition or hardship now?

***It gives:***

- ***Hope*** — *Christ will return in glory*
- ***Perspective*** — *suffering is temporary – Heaven is for eternity!*
- ***Encouragement*** — *God’s people will be gathered*
- ***Stability*** — *Jesus’ words cannot fail*
- ***Purpose*** — *remain faithful until He comes*

***This is profoundly pastoral and helpful for believers under pressure.***

16. How do the following passages relate to **Mark 13:24-37**?

**Daniel 7:13-14**

*These verses are the source of the “Son of Man coming with clouds” imagery that Jesus uses in Mark 13; and fulfils Daniel’s vision!*

**Isaiah 13:9-13**

*Isaiah uses cosmic darkening language for divine judgment which is the background for Jesus' apocalyptic (revelation or unveiling) imagery!*

**Acts 1:9-11**

*In these verses Jesus ascends in the clouds to Heaven and there is a promise that He will return the same way (in clouds) which is what Jesus is also saying in Mark 13*

**1 Thessalonians 4:16–17**

*This is a parallel to what Jesus is saying in Mark 13. Here in 1 Thessalonians 4, the Lord Jesus descends all clouds, accompanied by trumpets and angels – and believers who are still alive are caught up to meet Jesus!*

*Living believers will be “caught up” (Greek **harpazō**)*

*The Latin translation of **harpazō** is **rapiemur**, from which we get the English term **rapture**.*

**1 Corinthians 15:23–26**

*These verses describe Christ's return; the resurrection and the final defeat of death itself! This is the ultimate outcome of the return of Jesus described in Mark 13.*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Mark 13:24-37

**Jesus is DEFINITELY coming back — so stay alert, stay faithful, and be prepared!**



**What light globe moment did you have?**

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

**Share the verse** that had a special meaning to you in this study?

***V26 - At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.***

**Finish in prayer:** Faithful Father, we thank you for the sure promise that Christ will come in glory. Help us to live watchfully and faithfully, trusting your word, serving you with hope and perseverance, until that day. Come Lord Jesus, come! In Jesus Name, we pray. Amen.

**Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke  
Toukley Presbyterian Church  
January 2026**

**Resources:**

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

The Gospel of Mark (William Barclay)

The Gospel of St. Mark Commentary by C.E.B. Cranfield

Preaching Mark by Phil Crowter

The Gospel of Mark by Ben Witherington III

Matthew Henry's Commentary