

## **Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**

### **Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark***

#### **Lesson 10 “The Last Days”**

#### **Read for this week’s study**

Mark 12:41–44; Mark 13:1–32; Daniel 9:24–27; Daniel 7:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

#### **Memory Text**

“ ‘Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven’ ” (Mark 13:26, 27, NKJV).

#### **Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. Two Little Coins in the Offering
- III. Not One Stone on Another
- IV. The Abomination of Desolation
- V. The Great Tribulation
- VI. The Coming of the Son of Man
- VII. Further Study

#### **Questions and Notes for Consideration**

##### **Facilitator: Daniel Duda**

1. “Like many teachings of Jesus in Mark, the Lord’s instruction is in response to a question or a misunderstanding by His disciples. These questions or misunderstandings give Jesus the opportunity to teach truths vital to Christian life and experience. Jesus not only predicts the future but also instructs His disciples both then and now in how to prepare for the coming trials.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. In the last story of Chapter 12, Jesus contrasts the rich people who can afford to give plenty to the Temple treasury (and make sure that the others see that they are doing it), with the poor widow who has given “her whole life,” putting in everything she had (Sunday’s lesson).
3. What is the connection between Jesus’ riddle about David’s Lord and David’s son and the sacrifice of the widow? Jesus has no qualms drawing attention to a woman, insignificant by that world’s standards, to teach a spiritual lesson to His disciples and beyond. Why is it significant that Jesus uses women as didactic models of faith for people of His time and the subsequent Christian community?

4. After stopping the temple services from functioning in chapter 11, Jesus predicts that the whole temple will be demolished (13:3-13). No wonder the disciples are astonished. After all, they have just said how impressed they were with the sight of the temple (Monday's lesson). But the fact that they cannot even imagine these things happening does not preclude them from happening within a generation! Are there any lessons for us in all this?
5. What is striking in Mark 13:5–13 is that Jesus spends most of His time not in describing the fall of Jerusalem, but rather in warning His disciples "*beware*" four times, along with similar warnings and encouragements: don't be alarmed (13:7); don't worry (13:11); endure (13:13); understand (13:14), pray that it may not happen (13:18); don't believe false reports (13:21); be alert (13:23,33); be on the watch (13:34), and keep awake (13:35,37). Why is this significant? How does it fit with the overall response of the religious leaders (11:12-15) and the crowds (11:8-10; 14:43)?
6. Until v. 14 the disciples are supposed to stand firm and then they are supposed to run (so much so, that those with small children will have difficulty keeping up). Jesus speaks about the "desolating abomination" from Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 (Tuesday's lesson). How does this fit the theme of the vindication of Jesus: His resurrection, His ascension and His prediction of the destruction of the Temple?
7. Just as the time of Roman-Jewish war (AD 66-70) was a time of many would-be messiahs, false christs, offering rescue, trying to gain a following, promising signs and wonders, so it will be during the Christian era (Wednesday's lesson).
8. Thursday's lesson speaks about the coming of the Son of Man (13:24-32), of which only the Father knows (v. 32). How can we avoid reducing biblical prophecy to the level of a horoscope? The resulting command is not to "sit down and work out the prophetic timetable" – irresistibly exciting for so many people – but to "keep awake and watch". How do we do that?
9. The judgment that fell on the Temple in the first century is a foretaste, according to other New Testament passages, of the judgment that will fall on the whole world. How can we keep faithful to Jesus, rather than compromise with the present age? How can we be doing what we are supposed to do and leave to God what belongs to Him?
10. Don't let go of the good news, Jesus says, because "the one who endures to the end will be saved (13:13). When the Son of Man returns in glory, he will gather his faithful (13:26)."

## Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now, Satan cannot use this method—the method of open investigation and inquiry. He would lose if he did. He doesn't dare invite our questions, for the truth is not with him. And so, he has used religion to silence inquiry. And then diabolically, he calls that willingness to believe without inquiry, faith.

Instead of evidence and truth, he has to substitute force, and fear, and ignorance, and miracles, and excitement, and feelings, and pomp and majesty, and ceremony, and mystery, and especially claims upon claims. All these things we must beware and be ready lest we be deceived. Let's not underestimate his cunning. He deceived one third of the brilliant angels.

Of course, if we read the sixty-six books through, we realize how often we have been warned to beware of such things. Jesus Himself warns specifically of Satan's methods. Look at the first passage on the Bible Reference Sheet. The familiar words of Matthew 24:24: "If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is Christ!', or 'There He is!', don't believe it. False christs and false prophets are going to appear and will produce great signs and wonders to mislead, if it were possible, even God's own people!" (*Phillips*).

Also a little earlier in the same chapter, in Matthew 24:4, 5:

Jesus answered, "Watch out, and do not let anyone fool you. Many men, claiming to speak for me [and how many there are today], will come and say, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will fool many people." (GNT)

Just to show how far that can go, I brought just one book tonight. I think it is the most unusual Bible I have in my whole collection. I almost hesitate to travel with it lest it be found in my briefcase. This is *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ as Revised and Corrected by the Spirits*. It is the Spiritists' Bible. It is absolutely unbelievable. It came out in 1861. What is so remarkable about it, is that it thoroughly rewrites the New Testament in support of Spiritism. Yet, in the end of the Introduction, it claims that Jesus came down from heaven, the medium that He was, and the apostles came down with Him, and they corrected all the errors in the New Testament. And then it says, "Dear Reader, trust in God who made all things after the council of His own will. The Holy Spirits feel much interest in this work and the spirits who corrected this New Testament desire that the world will receive this correction as coming from them directed by God Himself, which is true. Signed, Jesus the Christ." A diabolical fraud! But look at the claim. Anybody can make claims. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #7, "The Question of Authority" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>*

On the other hand, the Second Coming is as near as our last moment of breath. And that's why I think of it at funerals. When a loved one dies, especially if he or she has been ill and in pain, the next moment of consciousness, that person is face to face with the Lord at the Second Coming. And I love that Thessalonians passage which says, "If someone dies before the Lord comes" and they feel maybe they have missed something? No. Thessalonians says, "They will arise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord."

So the main thing is, more important than knowing when the End comes, is to trust God. And if I should die tonight, I want to die His trusting child, because then I will arise His trusting child. I'll have no complaints. We'll all have lots of questions. We might even say, "I kind of wanted to live through that." I think Paul did. Remember there, Paul said, "I'm torn between staying with you to help you and my desire to depart and be with the Lord." He didn't believe in the immortality of the soul. He knew that as a Roman citizen, when his head was cut off with that sharp sword, the next instant of consciousness he'd be face to face with the One he'd been preaching about with such pride. So he had no complaints.

So the End is really very, very near. Especially in a Medical Center like this when we see folk come to the end of their lives all the time, sometimes very sad. We have good news for them: "You fall asleep tonight; you will wake up the next moment from a dreamless sleep face to face with the Lord." That's how near it is. But I believe the big event is also near. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19, "How Soon Will The Conflict Be Over?" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God's chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his angels cannot destroy them; for angels that excel in strength will protect them.—Letter 119, March 1, 1904, to J. J. Wessells. {TDG 69.5}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass. {Mar 252.2}

From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. {DA 210.2}

God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan’s deceptions. {CT 457.1}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

The manifestation of God’s love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. {5T 744.2}

Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites. {EW 56.2}

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. {GC 634.1}

As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth’s history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God’s saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a “God of gods,” able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him. {PK 513.1}

In the time of trouble, just previous to the coming of Christ, the lives of the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of holy angels. {3SG 196.1}

In the closing scenes of this earth’s history, when intensity is taking possession of every earthly element, the Lord requires of us a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But we are not left to struggle alone. Amid the dangers increasing on every hand, those who walk humbly before God, distrustful of their own wisdom, will have angels as their helpers and protectors. In times of special peril they will know the power of God’s keeping care.—RH April 25, 1907. {TA 272.3}

The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay.—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194. (1868) {Ev 694.2}