

The Supremacy of God Over the Accomplishments of Man
Mark 13:1-2

I. About Mark 13:1-2

A. About Mark 13: The Olivet Discourse

1. The longest sustained teaching by Jesus in the gospel of Mark
2. Has the character of
 - a. Apocalyptic - revelation of God in future events
 - b. Testimonial
 - (1) (Last Will and Testament)
 - (2) Farewell address focused on how the disciples will move forward as the world advances to its consummation

B. About Mark 13:1-2

1. The public ministry of Jesus has come to an end
2. Jesus is leaving the Temple for the last time
3. These two verses introduce the theme of the following chapter
 - a. The sovereignty of God in the life of the world
 - b. The sufficiency of God in the circumstances of His people
 - c. The supremacy of God over the accomplishments of man

II. Content of Mark 13:1-2

A. Jesus prophesies the destruction of the temple

1. Leaving the temple
 - a. Ezekiel 10-11: the glory leaves the temple
 - (1) The glory arrives in the Incarnation
 - (2) The glory revealed in the Transformation
 - (3) The glory returned to the Father's house on Palm Sunday
 - (a) The triumphal entry
 - (b) The cleansing of the temple
 - i) The authoritative expression of ownership
 - ii) The authoritative announcement of purpose
 - a) A house of prayer
 - b) For all nations
 - (4) Here, after days of resistance and challenge, Jesus leaves the temple for the last time
 - (a) Through the Eastern Gate
 - (b) Across the Kidron Valley
 - (c) Up the Mount of Olives
 - b. He takes the same route God's glory took in the days of Ezekiel when the prophet saw God abandon the temple because of the faithlessness and covenant-breaking sin of His people
2. A disciple comments on the impressiveness of human engineering and accomplishment of the Temple
 - a. Disciple
 - (1) Draws attention to the sheer physical impressiveness of the building

- (2) Uses a specific word that in this context means magnificent, wondrous, amazing, inspiring
- b. Josephus -
 - (1) 35 acres on the top of a mountain at the endpoint of a ridge overlooking valleys on each side
 - (2) “The exterior of the building wanted nothing that could astound either mind or eye. For, being covered on all sides with massive plates of gold, the sun was no sooner up than it radiated so fiery a flash that persons straining to look at it were compelled to avert their eyes, as from solar rays. To approaching strangers it appeared from a distance like a snow-clad mountain; for all that was not overlaid with gold was pure white. Some of the stones in the building were forty five cubits in length, five in height and six in breadth.”
 - (3) 60'x11'x8' (600 tons = 1.2 million pounds)
- c. In some ways, a final challenge for Jesus to concede the efforts of humanity to deserve the praise of God
 - (1) For Jesus: An echo of the temptation to assume the glory of all nations if only He will abandon God’s plan and take it all for Himself
 - (2) Attitude of disciple
 - (a) Look what we’ve done for God
 - (b) Look how skillful and amazing we are
 - (c) God should feel quite obligated to keep His covenant given the great lengths to which we have gone to house Him
 - (3) Jesus: reply,
 - (a) “Yeah, they’re big, but they’re all coming down.”
 - (b) Jesus prophesy’s the destruction of the temple

B. History repeated

- 1. Babel (Genesis 11:1-9)
 - a. **Genesis 11:4 (ESV) *Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”***
 - b. In direct denial of God’s creation command: “Fill the earth,” they plan to disobey God and impress Him with their own building that reaches Him on their terms.
- 2. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:1-37)
 - a. King’s dream warns of impending judgment on human pride with a merciful restoration after a meaningful humiliation
 - b. When the king learns who God is, then he is restored
 - c. When the king discovers the supremacy of God over the accomplishments of man, he finds his true place in universe and

- human history
- d. When the king finds the supremacy of God over the accomplishments of man he finds his real worth and true purpose in the grace of God.

III. The Challenge for Us

A. The supremacy of Jesus

1. What accomplishment of man in the entire course of human history surpasses the work of God in salvation through Jesus Christ?
 - a. The incarnation: God Himself in human form
 - b. The crucifixion: God Himself on the cross for human sin
 - (1) Justification: God fulfills perfect obedience to His own Law on our behalf
 - (2) Propitiation: God removes His wrath from the guilty by His own sacrifice
 - c. The resurrection: God certifies the validity and completion of His saving work
 - d. Salvation:
 - (1) the work of the Spirit of God in the spirit of man to provide the saving grace that leads to faith in Jesus Christ
 - (2) the ongoing work of the Spirit to produce holiness of heart
2. What accomplishment of man surpasses the glory of God in salvation through Jesus Christ?

B. What accomplishment of yours will you raise to God and offer as the reason He should obligate Himself to you?

1. Reasons
 - a. Look God, I go to church - love me
 - b. Look God, I support the church financially - bless me
 - c. Look God, I preached a sermon, or attended a Bible study, or what?
2. There is no greater accomplishment more worthy of humble worship and consistent adoration than the death and resurrection of Jesus
3. There is no greater expectation more worthy of humble surrender and consistent service than the return of Jesus.

C. Lesson of Nebuchadnezzar

1. **Daniel 4:17 (ESV) *The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.***
2. That the living may know that the Most High rules, that God is supreme over all the accomplishments of men, and He alone is worthy of faith and worship, devotion and obedience.