

## **Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Session 20, Poor Widow, Eschatological Discourse (Mark 12:38-13:36)**

### **Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

#### **1. Abstract of Jennings, Mark, Session 20, Poor Widow, Eschatological Discourse (Mark 12:38-13:36), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Mark Jennings' lecture on Mark 12:38-13:36 analyzes Jesus' final public teachings in Jerusalem, beginning with a contrast between the self-serving religious leaders and the sacrificial giving of a poor widow. This passage concludes Jesus' confrontations with the scribes and transitions into the **Olivet Discourse in Mark 13, which addresses the destruction of the temple and eschatological events**. Jennings clarifies that while the disciples link the temple's demise with the end times, **Jesus distinguishes between the near-term tribulation of Jerusalem's fall and the ultimate signs of his return**, emphasizing watchfulness over predicting the exact timing. He explains that the interim period will be characterized by persecution and the spread of the gospel, culminating in Jesus' powerful and undeniable second coming and the gathering of the elect. **The lecture underscores the certainty of Christ's return while cautioning against attempts to pinpoint the unknown hour.**

**2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Jennings, Mark, Session 20 – Double click icon to play in  
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]  
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →  
Gospels → Mark).**



### 3. Briefing Document: Jennings, Session 20, Poor Widow, Eschatological Discourse (Mark 12:38-13:36)

#### Briefing Document: Analysis of Mark 12:38-13:36

**Subject:** Analysis of Jesus' Teachings on the Scribes, the Poor Widow, and the Eschatological Discourse in Mark's Gospel (Mark 12:38-13:36)

**Overview:** This briefing document summarizes the key themes and interpretations presented by Dr. Mark Jennings in his lecture on Mark 12:38-13:36. The lecture focuses on the conclusion of Jesus' public teaching in Jerusalem, highlighting his critique of the religious leaders (scribes) contrasted with the exemplary faith of the poor widow, followed by an analysis of the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13) concerning the destruction of the temple and the coming of the Son of Man.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

##### I. Jesus' Polemic Against the Scribes and the Poor Widow (Mark 12:38-44):

- **Critique of the Scribes:** Jesus concludes his public teaching with a strong warning against the scribes, highlighting their hypocrisy and misplaced priorities. He criticizes their desire for social status and honor ("like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts") while simultaneously exploiting the vulnerable ("who devour widows' houses").
- **Hypocrisy and Pretense:** Jennings emphasizes the contrast between the scribes' outward displays of piety ("for a pretense make long prayers") and their inner corruption and cruelty. He notes the particular cruelty of "devouring widows' houses," given that the law was intended to protect widows.
- **Judgment:** Jesus declares that the scribes "will receive the greater condemnation," linking his warnings with claims of judgment in Jerusalem.
- **The Poor Widow's Offering:** Jesus contrasts the actions of the wealthy, who give out of their surplus, with the profound sacrifice of a poor widow who "put in two small copper coins, which make a penny... out of her poverty, has put in everything she had and all she had to live on."
- **True Devotion and Trust:** Jennings argues that the widow's act exemplifies "full devotion" to God and demonstrates a complete "trust that she will be provided

for." He connects this back to the scribe's earlier question about the greatest commandment (love of God and neighbor), suggesting the widow's action is a visual representation of fulfilling this commandment.

- **Judgment on the Religious Establishment:** Jesus uses the widow's giving as a "statement of judgment against the scribes and these other people, the religious establishment." The fact that the widow, who should have been cared for, is giving all she has underscores the failure of the religious leaders.
- **Significance as the Final Public Teaching:** Jennings emphasizes that Mark strategically places this story at the end of Jesus' public teaching in Jerusalem, suggesting it serves as a "fitting summary to what the language of judgment and discipleship that Jesus has been using."

## II. The Eschatological Discourse (Mark 13:1-37):

- **Context of Judgment:** Jennings frames Mark 13 within the context of Jesus' ongoing critique of Israel's leadership and the impending judgment on the temple. He notes the "failure of Israel, especially its leaders, to obey its commission" and the "inevitable judgment, especially at the end of the temple."
- **Eschatological vs. Apocalyptic Discourse:** Jennings clarifies that while Mark 13 has similarities to apocalyptic literature, it might be more accurately described as eschatological. He points out the absence of typical apocalyptic elements like "a heavenly vision of some sort, often an angelic mediator," and "a summation of human history." Instead, it focuses on "the last days, final days, and movements" and the "age that is instituted with the arrival of Christ."
- **Destruction of the Temple (Mark 13:1-4):** Jesus' prediction that "there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down" is a clear statement about the temple's destruction. Jennings highlights that the active language of "thrown down" reinforces the idea of a curse and judgment. He also notes that the phrase "one stone upon another" is the "exact reversal of construction language," emphasizing the complete undoing of the temple. The lack of a "unless you repent" clause signifies a finalized judgment.
- **Disciples' Question and Misconception (Mark 13:3-4):** The disciples' question, "Tell us when will these things be and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" reveals their assumption that the temple's destruction is synonymous with the end of all things. Jennings believes this is their "error."

- **What is Not a Sign (Mark 13:5-8):** Jesus begins his answer by outlining what will *not* be immediate signs of the end: "Many will come in my name saying, I am he, and they will lead many astray. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will be famines. These are but the beginning of birth pains." Jennings emphasizes that these are "birth pains" indicating a passage of time, not the immediate arrival of the end.
- **The Character of the Intervening Time (Mark 13:9-13):** This period between Jesus' departure and return will be characterized by "suffering" (persecution, being delivered to councils, beaten in synagogues) and "mission" ("the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations"). Jennings highlights the "irony" of the persecuted church bringing the gospel to their persecutors. He clarifies that the gospel reaching all nations is not necessarily a predictable trigger for the end but rather an affirmation of its continued spread amidst suffering.
- **The Abomination of Desolation and the Sacking of Jerusalem (Mark 13:14-23):** This section shifts to a more specific "birth pain," which Jennings interprets as the "sacking of Jerusalem" and the "destruction of the temple" by Rome. The "abomination of desolation" is linked to pagan elements being introduced into the temple. The specific instructions to flee Judea quickly suggest an imminent event. Jennings acknowledges the hyperbolic language ("such tribulation that has not been from the beginning of the creation...until now and never will be") but notes the historical severity of Jerusalem's destruction. The "shortening of days" is seen as God's intervention out of compassion for the elect (likely Jewish followers of Jesus). This event serves as a clear fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy.
- **Signs of the End (Mark 13:24-27):** After the tribulation of Jerusalem's fall, Jesus describes cosmic disturbances ("the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven") followed by the coming of the Son of Man "in clouds with great power and glory" and the gathering of the elect from all over the world. Jennings notes that the "days" mentioned here are often used in the Old Testament to describe theophany and divine judgment. He argues that the "sign of the end" is the arrival of Jesus himself, and attempts to predict it are futile and open to deception.

- **The Parable of the Fig Tree (Mark 13:28-31):** The lesson from the fig tree is that when certain signs (cosmic disturbances) occur, believers can know that the Son of Man is "near, at the very gates." The statement "this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" is complex, but the enduring nature of Jesus' words ("Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away") is emphasized.
- **The Unknown Time of the Return (Mark 13:32-37):** Jesus explicitly states, "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father." Jennings argues that this statement highlights the "foolishness" of trying to predict the timing of Jesus' return. The emphasis shifts to watchfulness and preparedness ("Be on your guard and keep awake"). The parable of the man going on a journey reinforces the need for constant vigilance. Jesus' final instruction is a universal call: "Stay awake."

### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Jennings' lecture provides a detailed analysis of Mark 12:38-13:36, emphasizing the stark contrast between the corrupt religious leaders and the faithful poor widow. His interpretation of the eschatological discourse in Mark 13 distinguishes between the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (a specific judgment) and the ultimate coming of the Son of Man. He stresses the unpredictable nature of the final return, urging believers to focus on faithful living and constant watchfulness rather than attempting to decipher specific timelines. The lecture underscores the prophetic accuracy of Jesus' words and the enduring hope of his promised return.

## 4. Study Guide: Jennings, Session 20, Poor Widow, Eschatological Discourse (Mark 12:38-13:36)

Study Guide: Mark 12:38-13:36

### Key Themes and Concepts

- **Critique of Religious Leaders:** Jesus' sharp contrast between the piety the scribes project and their exploitative actions, particularly towards vulnerable individuals like widows.
- **True Devotion:** The story of the poor widow as an example of genuine faith and complete devotion to God, contrasted with the superficial and self-serving giving of the wealthy.
- **Judgment and Condemnation:** Jesus' pronouncements of judgment against the scribes and his prediction of the temple's destruction.
- **Eschatological Discourse:** Jesus' extended teaching on the future, including the destruction of the temple, signs preceding the end times, and his eventual return.
- **Distinguishing Signs and Birth Pains:** Jesus clarifies that certain events, like wars and persecution, are not immediate signs of the end but rather "birth pains" indicating a period of time before the ultimate conclusion.
- **The Abomination of Desolation:** A specific event, likely the desecration of the Jerusalem temple, serving as a more immediate sign of impending judgment.
- **The Coming of the Son of Man:** The ultimate sign of the end times, accompanied by cosmic disturbances and the gathering of the elect.
- **Watchfulness and Preparedness:** Jesus' emphasis on the uncertainty of the timing of his return and the need for constant vigilance and readiness.
- **Relationship between Temple Destruction and the End Times:** The disciples' initial conflation of these two events and Jesus' clarification of their distinct nature and timing.

### Quiz

1. Describe the behavior of the scribes that Jesus criticizes in Mark 12:38-40. What is the central contradiction Jesus points out in their actions?

2. Explain the significance of the poor widow's offering in Mark 12:41-44. How does Jesus use her act to contrast with the giving of the rich?
3. What prompts Jesus' eschatological discourse in Mark 13? What specific prediction does he make that initiates this teaching?
4. According to Jesus in Mark 13:5-8, what are some events that will occur, and why does he say these are not signs of the immediate end? What term does he use to describe them?
5. What is the "abomination of desolation" mentioned in Mark 13:14? What historical event might this refer to, according to the lecture?
6. In Mark 13:24-27, what cosmic events does Jesus describe? What event will follow these signs, signaling the true end times?
7. What lesson does Jesus draw from the fig tree in Mark 13:28-31? What assurance does he give regarding his own words?
8. What does Jesus say about knowing the specific time of his return in Mark 13:32? Why does he emphasize this point?
9. What analogy does Jesus use in Mark 13:34-36 to illustrate the importance of watchfulness? What is the main command he gives to his followers?
10. How does the lecture suggest the disciples initially misunderstood the relationship between the destruction of the temple and the end of all things? How does Jesus attempt to correct this misunderstanding?

### **Answer Key**

1. Jesus criticizes the scribes for their desire for public honor (long robes, greetings, best seats), their exploitation of vulnerable people ("devour widows' houses"), and their hypocritical long prayers. The central contradiction is between their outward displays of piety and their inward greed and cruelty.
2. The poor widow's offering of two small copper coins, all she had to live on, is significant because it represents complete and sacrificial devotion to God. Jesus contrasts her giving with the rich who gave out of their surplus, highlighting that the widow gave more in God's eyes due to her poverty and faith.
3. Jesus' eschatological discourse is prompted by a disciple's admiration of the temple buildings and Jesus' subsequent prediction that not one stone would be left upon another. This statement about the temple's destruction leads to the

disciples' private questions about when this will happen and what the signs will be.

4. Jesus mentions wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines as events that will occur. He states that these are not signs of the immediate end but rather "birth pains," indicating the beginning of a period of tribulation but not the final culmination.
5. The "abomination of desolation" is a concept from the Old Testament referring to the desecration of the Jerusalem temple with pagan elements. The lecture suggests this likely refers to the Roman entry into Jerusalem and the actions that led to the temple's destruction in 70 AD.
6. Jesus describes the sun being darkened, the moon not giving its light, and the stars falling from heaven. Following these cosmic disturbances, the Son of Man will be seen coming in clouds with great power and glory.
7. Jesus uses the analogy of the fig tree sprouting leaves to illustrate that just as the arrival of summer is predictable from these signs, so too will his return be evident when the described events take place. He assures his followers that his words will never pass away.
8. Jesus explicitly states that no one knows the day or hour of his return, not even the angels in heaven or the Son, but only the Father. He emphasizes this to discourage speculation about the timing and to stress the importance of constant readiness over prediction.
9. Jesus uses the analogy of a man leaving his servants in charge, each with their work, and commanding the doorkeeper to stay awake. The main command he gives is to "stay awake" because they do not know when the master will return.
10. The lecture suggests the disciples initially believed the destruction of the temple would coincide directly with the end of the age and the coming of the Messiah. Jesus corrects this by presenting the temple's destruction as a specific, albeit significant, event within a longer period characterized by other "birth pains" before the ultimate signs of his return.



## Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the contrast Jesus draws between the religious leaders (scribes) and the poor widow in Mark 12:38-44. What does this passage reveal about true faith and devotion according to Jesus?
2. Discuss the significance of Jesus' prediction of the temple's destruction in Mark 13:2. How does this prophecy function within the broader context of his ministry and the subsequent eschatological discourse?
3. Explain the difference Jesus establishes between the "birth pains" (Mark 13:5-13) and the ultimate signs of the end times (Mark 13:24-27) in his Olivet Discourse. Why is this distinction important for his followers?
4. Interpret the meaning and potential historical fulfillment of the "abomination of desolation" in Mark 13:14. How does this event fit into Jesus' overall teaching about the future?
5. Explore the implications of Jesus' statement in Mark 13:32 about the unknown timing of his return. How should this uncertainty shape the lives and actions of his followers, according to the teachings in Mark 13:33-37?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Scribes:** Jewish scholars and teachers of the Law, often associated with religious authority.
- **Polemic:** A strong verbal or written attack on someone or something. In this context, Jesus' sharp criticism of the scribes.
- **Treasury:** In the context of the temple, the place where offerings and donations were collected.
- **Eschatological Discourse:** A speech or teaching concerning the end times, final events, and the ultimate destiny of humanity and the cosmos. The Olivet Discourse in Mark 13 is a prime example.
- **Apocalyptic Literature:** A genre of writing that often features symbolic language, visions of heavenly realities, and predictions of future cataclysmic events and the triumph of good over evil.
- **Birth Pains:** A metaphor used by Jesus in Mark 13:8 to describe a series of events (wars, famines, etc.) that will precede the end times but are not the definitive signs of their immediate arrival.
- **Abomination of Desolation:** A phrase originating in the Book of Daniel, referring to a sacrilegious act that defiles the temple. In Mark 13, it is presented as a significant sign of impending judgment.
- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humankind, often accompanied by dramatic natural phenomena.
- **Son of Man:** A title frequently used by Jesus to refer to himself, often carrying connotations of both humanity and divine authority, particularly in relation to his future coming in glory.
- **Elect:** Those chosen by God for salvation. In the context of Mark 13, it refers to believers who will be gathered at Jesus' return.

## **5. FAQs on Jennings, Mark, Session 20, Poor Widow, Eschatological Discourse (Mark 12:38-13:36), Biblicalearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on Mark 12:38-13:36**

#### **1. What was the main point of Jesus' warning against the scribes in Mark 12:38-40?**

Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the scribes due to their hypocrisy and misplaced priorities. They sought public honor and financial gain, even "devouring widows' houses," while making a pretense of piety through long prayers. Their desire for social status and wealth contrasted sharply with their exploitation of the vulnerable, leading Jesus to declare they would receive greater condemnation.

#### **2. How did Jesus use the poor widow's offering in Mark 12:41-44 to contrast with the scribes and wealthy donors?**

Jesus used the poor widow's offering of two small coins as an example of true devotion and faith. While the wealthy gave large sums out of their surplus, the widow gave "everything she had, all she had to live on." This act demonstrated complete trust in God's provision and selfless sacrifice, standing in stark contrast to the self-serving actions and outward displays of piety by the scribes and the less sacrificial giving of the rich. Jesus affirmed that her small contribution was worth more than all the others combined because it came from her poverty and represented her entire livelihood.

#### **3. What is the significance of Mark 13 being referred to as the "Eschatological Discourse" or "Little Apocalypse"?**

Mark 13 is a significant passage where Jesus addresses questions about the future, specifically the destruction of the temple and the signs of his coming. It's called the Eschatological Discourse because it deals with "eschatology," the study of the end times or last things. It's sometimes referred to as the "Little Apocalypse" due to its thematic similarities with apocalyptic literature, such as predictions of upheaval, cosmic disturbances, and the coming of the Son of Man. However, it differs from typical apocalyptic writings in its lack of extensive heavenly visions and a summation of human history.

**4. According to Jesus in Mark 13:5-8, what events will precede the ultimate end, and how should believers respond to them?**

Jesus stated that before the ultimate end, there would be deceptive figures claiming to be him, wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines. He instructed his followers not to be alarmed by these events, as they are "but the beginning of birth pains" and a necessary precursor to the end. This implies a period of time characterized by such turmoil, and believers should be discerning and not mistake these events for immediate signs of the final culmination.

**5. In Mark 13:14-23, what specific event does Jesus describe, and what instructions does he give to those in Judea?**

Jesus describes the "abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be," a phrase drawing from the Old Testament and likely referring to the desecration of the Jerusalem temple. He instructs those in Judea to flee to the mountains immediately and without delay when they see this sign. This passage seems to specifically foreshadow the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD, urging believers to seek safety.

**6. How does Jesus differentiate between the destruction of the temple and the ultimate coming of the Son of Man in Mark 13:24-27?**

Jesus distinguishes between the tribulation associated with the temple's destruction and the cosmic signs that will accompany the coming of the Son of Man. He says that "after that tribulation," the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Following these cosmic disturbances, the Son of Man will be seen coming in clouds with great power and glory to gather his elect from all over the world. This indicates that the destruction of the temple is a significant but distinct event from the final, universal return of Christ.

**7. What lesson does Jesus draw from the parable of the fig tree in Mark 13:28-31?**

The parable of the fig tree illustrates that just as the budding leaves of a fig tree signify the nearness of summer, certain signs will indicate the nearness of Jesus' return, which he says is "at the very gates" when "all these things take place." However, he also emphasizes the certainty of his words ("Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away") regarding these future events.

**8. What does Jesus say about knowing the specific time of his return in Mark 13:32-37, and what is his concluding exhortation?**

Jesus explicitly states that no one knows the specific day or hour of his return, "not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." Therefore, it is foolish to try and predict the timing. His concluding exhortation is for his followers to "be on your guard and keep awake," like servants who do not know when their master will return. This watchfulness and preparedness are essential to avoid being caught unaware and demonstrate faithful anticipation of his coming.