

## I. Mark 13:32 - That Day and Hour Unknown

### A. v32 - That Day and Hour Unknown

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Mark 13:32

1. Jesus seems to make a shift in Mark 13:32/Matthew 24:36 (not in Luke).
2. There are a few differences notable in this verse from what has preceded:
  - a. Previously Jesus had spoken of THIS GENERATION but now He speaks about THAT DAY.
  - b. Previously Jesus gave signs that the destruction of the Temple was imminent and expected people to be able to read those signs. But here, He says that NO ONE - not even the angels nor even Jesus Himself! - knows about THAT DAY. Furthermore, no signs are given.
3. This begs the question as to whether Jesus is still speaking about the destruction of the Temple within the current generation or if He has shifted to a future time that will see His final return.
  - a. Some believe it still points to the destruction of the Temple. Several arguments can be made in favor of this position.
    1. In Mark, no question is raised other than the destruction of the Temple. This makes it seem unlikely that Jesus would suddenly shift to a different topic.
    2. Although Jesus does refer to THIS GENERATION and THAT DAY, this is simply because a generation spans 40 years, but the day of the destruction will happen in a single day almost 40 years in the future. Thus, it is applicable to use THAT to refer to the future day.

3. Since the whole chapter has been about the destruction of the Temple, if Jesus suddenly wanted to shift to a different topic, He would have given a clear sign of this.

- b. Some believe this verse and those following (in both Mark and Matthew), shift topics and move the focus to the final return of Christ at the end of the world.
  1. Mark 13:30-31/Matthew 24:34-35/Luke 21:32-33 seem to be a strong ending to the first section of Jesus' discourse. It would be unusual for the following verses to be included within the time frame of THIS GENERATION but be placed after the statement!
  2. The shift from THIS GENERATION to THAT DAY signals a clear change of subjects. THIS GENERATION refers to the near time, while THAT DAY looks far into the future.
  3. In the Greek, Mark 13:32/Matthew 24:36 begin with the phrase Περὶ δὲ, which usually indicates a shift of topic. Though they are not translated in the NIV (1984), but they are in the KJV, the ESV, the NIV2011, the ASV, and the NET Bible. In general, the idea this phrase carries is "but concerning". Thus, Jesus indicates a change of subject. Basically, He says "Everything I have said will happen during THIS GENERATION. BUT CONCERNING THAT DAY, no one knows..."
  4. Whereas there are specific signs given for the impending destruction of the Temple and the end of the Old Covenant era - the worldwide spread of the Gospel and the Roman armies surrounding Jerusalem to destroy it and the Temple - there are no signs given for THAT DAY.
  5. The unusually strong statement that no one knows about THAT DAY indicates that a different event is in view. Jesus has gone to pains to speak of the certainty of the impending destruction of the Temple and end of the Old Covenant era, a fact which early believers spoke of and knew was drawing near (see Hebrews 8:13 for example). But NO ONE - not even Jesus - knows of the timing of THAT DAY, only the Father knows that.

6. Finally, in Matthew 24-25, the Olivet discourse continues on for quite a bit after the conclusion in Mark. And one of the key factors in the parables of Matthew 24:45-25 is the idea of “delay”.

But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’  
Matthew 24:48

The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. Matthew 25:5

After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. Matthew 25:19

- c. While either of these views could be possible, I think the arguments in favor of seeing a change in the subject beginning in Mark 13:32/Matthew 24:36 are stronger. Thus, I think at this point in the discourse the subject changes to the final return of Christ and the end of the world. Although Mark does not record the disciples asking a question about this, it is not uncommon for Jesus to move beyond the original question to probe a deeper topic, and it appears He did this here.

#### B. v32 - The Son does not know the date?

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, **nor the Son**, but only the Father.  
Mark 13:32

1. Some struggle with this phrase - how could Jesus not know everything if He is Divine?
2. This is outside the scope of what we are looking at in these special audio After Hours, but I will deal with it quickly.

3. The answer to this supposed problem is that in His incarnation Jesus did not exercise all of His Divine prerogatives. As the God-Man, He temporarily chose not to use all of His Divine power and abilities. This is why He ate, slept, could be tempted, and even died - for He was truly human. As part of this, He did not use the Divine ability and right of omniscience - so in the days of His earthly ministry He only knew the future or had Divine insight when it was given to Him by the Spirit. Apparently this was not granted regarding the date of His final return. Thus, this is not a problem - it is simply part of the Incarnation.

## II. Mark 13:33-37 - Keep Watch!

- A. The warning to keep watch for Christ’s final return  
Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. <sup>34</sup> It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. <sup>35</sup> Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back — whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. <sup>36</sup> If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. <sup>37</sup> What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’ Mark 13:33-37
  1. Because no one knows the date of Christ’s final return, Jesus gives a warning that is applicable “to everyone” (v37) - WATCH!
  2. Because there are no signs that believers can see to know the final return of Christ and the end of the world is near, the call is to be ever vigilant - be on guard, be alert, keep watch, watch!

3. Note the two key ideas in this short final exhortation:
  - a. Be ever vigilant. This is indicated in the phrases “Be on guard!”, “Be alert!”, “Keep watch”, and “Watch!”.
  - b. This is necessary because you do not know when the end is near. This is indicated in the phrases “You do not know when that time will come”, and “you do not know when the owner of the house will come back”. It is also reinforced in the phrase that you do not even know the return will “be in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn”. In other words, it could be at any time, and you will have no prior warning or idea.
4. This is applicable to all generations of believers. Note verse 37 - the command to the disciples to watch is the same command for everyone - watch!
5. This is not a command to watch for signs, for none are given. Rather, it is a sign to be vigilant to be awake and faithful to Christ no matter how long until His return. That this is the point is confirmed in the parables of Matthew 24:45 and following.
6. Thus, we are called to use every breath we are given to serve God’s purposes in our day, ever mindful of the certain return of Jesus. This requires no setting of dates, constant poring over “supposed signs” - but rather a heart aflame with love for Jesus and a desire to bless those around us and point them to Jesus.