

Mark 13:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

Analysis

As he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple—the Mount of Olives overlooks Jerusalem and the temple mount from the east, across the Kidron Valley. This location is deeply symbolic: Zechariah 14:4 prophesied Messiah would stand on the Mount of Olives when He returns. Jesus delivered this discourse with the doomed temple visible before Him. The Greek *katēnanti* (κατέναυτι, 'over against') indicates direct facing, visual confrontation.

Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately—Mark alone names all four disciples (Matthew 24:3 mentions only 'disciples,' Luke 21:7 'they'). These were the inner circle, first called (1:16-20). The private questioning (Greek *kat' idian*, κατ' ιδίαν) shows they sought clarification away from crowds. They wanted to understand the shocking prophecy of temple destruction.

Historical Context

The Mount of Olives was significant in Jesus' ministry—He often withdrew there (Luke 21:37), prayed there in Gethsemane (Mark 14:26), ascended from there (Acts 1:9-12), and will return there (Zechariah 14:4; Acts 1:11). The private discourse format was common in Jewish rabbinic teaching—public parables for crowds, detailed explanation for disciples. This was Passion Week, days before Jesus' arrest. The temple's visible presence made His prophecy concrete. The four disciples formed Jesus' first followers, all fishermen from Galilee. Peter, James, and

John were present at Transfiguration (9:2) and Gethsemane (14:33)—the inner circle witnessing glory and agony.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why might Jesus have chosen this specific location—overlooking the temple from the Mount of Olives—to deliver His discourse on the temple's destruction and His return?
2. What does the disciples' private questioning teach about seeking understanding when God's revelations challenge our expectations?
3. How does naming Peter, James, John, and Andrew emphasize continuity from Jesus' earthly ministry to post-resurrection church leadership?

Interlinear Text

καὶ καθημένου αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ Ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν
And as he sat him upon the mount of Olives

κατέναντι τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν κατ' ιδίαν
over against the temple asked him privately

Πέτρος καὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ Ἀνδρέας
Peter And James And John And Andrew

Additional Cross-References

Mark 4:34 (Parallel theme): But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

Matthew 21:1 (Parallel theme): And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

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