

“Mark 13: Jesus on the End Times - Part 4”

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[0 : 0 0] jump into Mark. We are in Mark chapter 13 and we're looking at a passage called the Olivet Discourse that Jesus gave on the end times. The whole chapter, chapter 13, is on this.

It's a long discourse. In fact, Mark has one of the more brief versions. Luke also records the same discourse and Matthew actually takes up a full two chapters. But as we've talked about before, this passage is, in this discourse, is all about the seven-year tribulation that has been prophesied really for thousands of years that would be coming at the end of the age, at the end of really Israel's age, not the end of all time per se, but the end of really a significant portion of time in the history of the world. Life is eternal. God created us to be eternal beings and we will all live on forever. The Bible talks about eternal life, but then also eternal death. But this seven-year tribulation will mark the end of an era in the beginning of a new one, a new one called the Kingdom Era, in which Jesus Christ will reign for a thousand years and then after that there will be one final battle, the Bible says, and then it will be an age called the new heavens and the new earth.

And the Bible doesn't tell us anything beyond that. After that, you know, who knows what life will look like. There are details about, a little bit about what life will look like in the new heavens and earth. But as far as what happens in the future beyond that, there aren't many details provided.

Last week, we looked at, as far as the seven-year tribulation, at really the first half of the tribulation. And the Bible indicates that the first half will be difficult. It will be a time of great trial and trouble, specifically for the people of Israel. But then the second half will be even worse.

And so we've been looking at the first half. The phrase used is the beginning of sorrows. Or I think in some translations, it says the beginning of birth pains.

[2 : 1 6] And then there's this transition that happens, and we'll actually look at that today. It was actually brought up during the study in Daniel, which by the way, if you haven't made it out to Sunday school or if it's not something you attend regularly, I think you would really enjoy the Sunday school class. We just started the book of Daniel today, and we'll probably be going through it for several months.

Let's go ahead and read through this passage again. We'll start from verse 3, Mark chapter 13, verse 3, and then we'll go, let's see how far we want to get to. I think we'll go through the second coming here. You know what, I'm going to have to use these.

Verse 3, Now as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled? And Jesus answered them and began saying, take heed that no one deceives you.

For many will come in my name, saying, I am he, and will deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled, for such things must happen, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles.

These are the beginnings of sorrows. But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You'll be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand or premeditate what you will speak, for whatever is given you in that hour, speak that. For it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Now brother will betray brother to death, and father his child, and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing where it ought not, let the reader understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

[4 : 32] Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant, and those who are nursing babies in those days. And pray that your flight may not be in winter.

For in those days there will be tribulation such has not been seen, such has not been since the beginning of the creation, which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved. But for the elect's sake, whom he chose, he shortened the days. Then if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or look, here he is, do not believe it.

For false Christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. But take heed, see, I have told you all things beforehand. But in those days after the tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. The stars of heaven will fall, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And 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 together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts, part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

We'll finish there. That basically gives the whole timeline, and the rest is really just a little bit of a commentary that Jesus gives on what he just said and what's going to happen, and we'll get into that in a week or two. But this is, again, like we said, the seven-year tribulation. We looked at the first few verses. This midpoint, this middle point, this three-and-a-half-year point in a seven-year period is the abomination of desolation, and that marks the middle. And when that happens, as we just read, things will really ramp up. But we're going to go back and finish, because we didn't really get through everything here in the beginning of sorrows, this first three-and-a-half years about what's going on.

In verse, let's see, where can we kind of do a quick review? Verse 9, but watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for my name's sake, or for my sake, and for a testimony to them. And the gospel must be preached to all the nations. And so this is going to be time of great persecution for believers, those who trust in Christ. And remember, again, specifically, this is for the nation of Israel. There will be a great coming into the faith of Israel. After the time of Jesus, after he was crucified, at the hands of, well, the Romans, but also, who's the one that put the Romans up to it?

[7 : 21] It was his own people. It was the Jewish people. And in early acts, after Jesus ascends into heaven, and he gives his disciples instructions to preach the gospel to the Jews.

And where was I going with that? He told them to preach the gospel throughout all the nations, specifically, starting in Jerusalem. But he warned them about the persecutions that were going to come.

And you're going to have to, many of you are going to have to give up your lives. But some of you, you'll survive. In verse 11 here, which is where we'll start today, it says, but when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand or premeditate what you will speak.

But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. He's telling them, listen, you're going to go out, there's going to be persecution, you're going to stand before rulers and kings. They're going to put you in prison, they're going to try to kill you.

But don't worry. He says here, they're going to deliver you up and arrest you, but don't worry. That's kind of a hard thing to do, right? There's going to be a lot of trouble, you're going to be persecuted, you're going to be thrown in jail, but don't worry about it. He says, don't worry or premeditate what you will speak. I think what he's trying to say here is, he says, hey, don't worry about necessarily being prepared. And don't worry that this is something that is outside of God's plan.

[9 : 03] This is actually part of God's plan for you to suffer and to be persecuted. Now, you're not going to necessarily hear that in a lot of churches, but even today in the age of grace in which we live, part of God's plan is that we would endure through suffering. And not necessarily that everything that we suffer is God micromanaging our suffering, that he is causing all the suffering, right? But there is pain and suffering in the world. And God has, in his wisdom, decided that all of us, both believer and unbeliever, would endure through suffering in this world and experience it.

And I think on the other side, when we experience glory, when we, in the afterlife, we will understand, I think very clearly, the value and the purpose of that more than we can right now.

But he's telling them, listen, I don't want you to prepare beforehand what you're going to say, because the Holy Spirit's going to be working very actively during this time to speak through you.

Now, if we look back in the Old Testament, did God speak through every Israelite? No, he didn't. But there were certain people, and we have a special name that we give them, that God spoke through in this way. And they were called prophets. And so there were certain people that God chose to be his spokesperson, usually to Israel, sometimes to other nations, sometimes to the king, specifically. I remember Nathan, the prophet, who spoke to David after he committed adultery, and God had a message for David. And he chose the prophet Nathan to deliver that message, which I'm sure he did with some fear and trepidation. But during this time of tribulation, the Holy Spirit will be active throughout the entire nation of Israel among the believers, working among them to do signs and wonders. And the other thing is to prophesy. And so this is what Jesus is saying. You don't need to be prepared, write up your speech that you're going to give before the king beforehand. You're going to be arrested. Don't worry about making plans. I'm going to work through you.

And so there isn't time to plan anyway. And so I think a mistake in one of the things as we've been going through the Gospel of Matthew specifically is making a difference, right, between the age of grace in which we live and the age of the preparation for the kingdom and the tribulation area and the kingdom era in which Jesus is really speaking about much of the time in the Gospels. And so is this how we should operate as Christians today? You know, when we're maybe going out to evangelize into, like, we've gone to the fair in the past, right? And so we have an opportunity to share the Gospel with people in that setting, in that venue. And so should we just expect, well, I'm not going to make any preparations. I'm just going to expect the Holy Spirit to speak through me. And there are people who would take that view and specifically look at this. And, you know, there are some people that are very just quick on their feet. Have you ever met somebody like this? They have a super quick wit. You know, we call it, you know, we say they have a quick wit and they can come up with jokes or responses or their mind is just sharp, really sharp. And they memorize all kinds of things. And when you talk to them, I think about, who's that guy that is really big on YouTube, Ben Shapiro. You guys familiar with him? He's kind of a conservative. He started the Daily Wire and all that. But he's famous for doing, going to college campuses and having these interactions with students live right there. And he has this mind, it's just incredible, where somebody can ask him a question and he can spout off all these facts that I'd have to look up, you know. I can't remember all these things, but he has that mind in which he can do that. And there are certain people who are that way. And so we might look at somebody like that and think, oh, well,

[13 : 20] God is working through them. This is an example of the Holy Spirit working through them, through them, because we see that. But is that the case necessarily? No, I mean, God could be working through somebody. And it is impressive when we see something like that. But it's not necessarily a sign of spirituality. Not in this day of grace in which we live. And in most of history, right, this isn't how God worked among the people. There were a few people that he chose as prophets, but certainly not the whole nation or not the whole of believers. You know, in this age of grace, we see what Paul, he gives instructions to us about how we ought to interact with people around us.

And he says this in 2 Timothy 2, verse 15. He says this, Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Some translations translate that be diligent to study.

Because this is a commandment, this is a teaching that, hey, you need to prepare beforehand. What you're going to share with people, what you're going to teach, how you're going to, as a Christian worker, share the gospel with people. Be prepared. And there are all kinds of scriptures about that, about we should be prepared and study. Be diligent. Don't just expect, expect, I'm not going to prepare. Now during this time, there's only, there's a very short, there's no time to prepare. So God's going to work among them supernaturally. There's going to be actually a lot of supernatural things going on at the time. We're going to move on to verse 12.

Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. This is describing family conflict. And most of us have experienced some kind of family conflict, right? But this is intense family conflict. This is a hatred and conflict so severe that, you know, there are, there are usually tight bonds of affection among family members, right? You know, you might betray, you know, somebody at work or somebody that, maybe a neighbor. But when it comes to betraying your own brother, your own parents, or even your children, that's pretty intense. And so what we're going to see during this time is a kind of betrayal you haven't seen. And certainly these things happen today, don't they? People betray brother and sister and parents and children. In fact, I think about during the Nazi Germany era in which, and you see this actually a lot, not only, you know, that was a socialist kind of regime, but in communist regimes as well, where the state will pit parents against children. And so I, you, you, we've heard of stories during the Nazi regime of teachers telling their students in class, I want you to report anything that you see from your parents that is against our regime. Those kinds of things will be at a whole new level during this tribulation period. But we actually see this even today among Christian believers, right? Now, not so much in America, though we do see this to some degree. But if somebody becomes a believer, trusts in Jesus Christ, you might, there might be some fallout, right? Your family might think you're kooky, or nuts, or puritanical, or judgmental, or any of those types of things, right? But typically, you're not going to get, your life is not going to be on the line. But there are places in the world where your life certainly will be on the line. Usually we think about Muslim countries, but it also happens in Hindu countries as well, and even in other places in the world, where if you convert to

Christianity, if you trust in Christ, your family will disown you. And that's something that people have to count the cost in. Verse 13, and you shall be hated by all for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end shall be saved. There will be a hatred against God's people, those who trust in Christ, specifically, again, of the Jewish people. Now, this tribulation, it's the time of, as the prophet said, the time of Jacob's trouble. There will be many Jewish people who come to faith in their Messiah, and there will be persecution based on that faith.

[18 : 30] Again, there's people hated all over the world because of their faith in Christ even now, but it will be at an intensity that is more than we've experienced even in our day.

I want to look at this last passage, and this is before we get to this midpoint of the tribulation. This is the final thing that he says, but he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this has caused a lot of people really heartache and trouble and concern because here he's teaching, hey, listen, there's going to be a lot of temptations to fall away. And Jesus actually has addressed these things throughout his three-year ministry. We think about the parable of the sower, which he talks about the word, this gospel of the kingdom being sowed. And some people, you know, they'll just dismiss the word outright, but then there are some people who will receive the word. They'll become disciples of Jesus, but then the cares of the world will cause them to fall away. For others, it's temptation, sin will cause them to fall away. For others, it's persecution. This is just too hard.

What Jesus is teaching here is that during this time period, it will be especially important that you don't fall away because of the trials, because of the persecution. In fact, you need to be willing to even put your life on the line. That's his plan for Israel, that they would lay their lives down. And there will be a great reward, a reward beyond their imaginations for those who are willing to do so. In Revelation 6, verse 9, it speaks to this in a similar manner. It says this, when he opened the fifth seal, and by the way, these seals are a series of judgments during the tribulation. I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth. Then a white robe was given to each of them. And it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who would be killed, who would be killed as them, was complete. These are people who had been killed during the tribulation. And they're looking for vengeance and justice, which by the way is not a bad thing. This is something that God is going to, he's going to judge the world for their wickedness. Jesus, enduring his many parables, talked about the requirement for entering into the kingdom. And again, going through this seven-year tribulation, he said, you need to live a lowly life. You don't need to be rich and powerful, because the rich and powerful are going to be the ones who are doing what? They're the ones that are going to be doing the persecuting. And so you're going to have to lower yourself, humble yourself. You're going to have to be willing to give up your possessions. In fact, he told some people to sell everything that you have and follow me. He said things like, take up your cross, which means a cross is an implement of execution. You need to be willing to die for the cause of Christ. You need to be willing to allow men to abuse you. And so he talked about turning the other cheek. And if somebody steals or takes your coat, give them the other. And if they force you to walk a mile, to walk a second mile. And these are all things that during the tribulation will be required to basically submit to the suffering. Now we're going to see in a little bit, he says, you know, there will be opportunities for you to flee, but do not take up arms and fight back because this is what God's plan is for you to endure through this suffering.

Again, another one in Revelation, Revelation chapter 2 verse 10, he says this, do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested and you will have tribulation for 10 days. He's talking about a very specific event to the church. I think it's in Smyrna. But he says this, be faithful until death and I will give you the crown of life. Now this is something during the tribulation, but is this, people look to this as a kind of a proof text that as Christians that we need to make sure that we endure in the same way like this in order to make sure we get to heaven.

But is that what the Bible teaches? Is that what the gospel of the grace of God teaches? Because that's the age in which we live. Paul calls it the gospel of the grace of God. In fact, what Paul teaches, who is, what does he call himself, the apostle to the Gentiles? Not the Jewish people. He was given a message, he called the gospel of grace, to the Gentile people. Again, like we talked about two weeks ago, I think it was, to make the Jews jealous because of their rejection of their Messiah.

[24 : 09] But Paul teaches that we are saved if we trust in him. We are saved, is it after enduring through a bunch of things? No, he says we are saved now. In Romans chapter 10, Romans chapter 10, it says this, for Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law. The man who does those things shall live by them. So in other words, the law taught that if you do these things, then you will get life, and specifically eternal life. But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way.

Do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven? That is to bring Christ down from above. Or who will descend into the abyss? That is to bring Christ up from the dead. But what does it say? The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart. That is the word of faith which we preach. That if you confess with your mouth of the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, that someday you will be saved. Is that what it says? No. That if you do these things, if you confess Jesus as your Lord, and believe that God raised him from the dead for your sins, that you will be saved. You will experience salvation here and now. You can experience that assurance in Colossians chapter 1.

There's this reference to us in this dispensation of grace, and a kingdom that we belong to, but it's a little bit of a different kingdom. He says this, Colossians chapter 1 verse 9, So he's actually telling these Gentile believers that you need to be good, faithful, faithful. You need to faithfully endure through tribulation and persecution as well.

But he ends it in a little bit of a different way. He said, giving thanks to the Father. He's saying, we will endure through these difficulties all the time, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us.

See, we don't need to qualify ourselves. He qualified us through what he accomplished on the cross for us, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

[27 : 01] In the light. He has delivered us already. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

We're not waiting to be conveyed into a kingdom like Jesus is describing for these Jews during this time of seven years of tribulation. During that time, they are enduring through all this suffering for a time in just a few years when if they endure through the end, they will be granted entrance into a physical kingdom here on earth. For us, God decided, in order to make his people jealous, he's going to offer something to the Gentiles that is just tremendous. That just by believing and trusting in what Christ accomplished on the cross on our behalf, that we can right now, immediately, as soon as we trust in him, we are conveyed immediately into a kingdom. We're qualified by him to enter.

We don't have to qualify ourselves. He qualifies us. Isn't that amazing? And it's so important that we don't get that confused. And this is a big problem, I think, in the church today is confusing that gospel of the kingdom with the gospel of the grace of God.

God's grace is amazing. All right. Are you ready to go into part two here of the tribulation? Because it's about to get a lot worse. He says in verse 14, So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing where it ought not, let the reader understand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

And so we're going to talk about this. What is this abomination of desolation? Sounds pretty impressive, right? But those are some big words. The first thing I want to address is, you know, some of you, you know, we have different Bible translations here. And I was talking to my dad. He said, in my Bible, or wherever he was reading, I can't remember. He says, it doesn't say anything about Daniel the prophet.

[29 : 20] And so I'm reading the New King James, by the way. And this is one example of a textual variance. There's certain differences in some of the old manuscripts that we use, many of them very minor.

But sometimes there will be a sentence or a few words missing from one or another. And so translation is difficult. And so people have to try to figure out, well, you know, was this omission a mistake? Or was the addition something somebody added? There are actually very few of those things. We're actually, when we get to the end of Mark, we're going to be talking about this a lot more because depending on which translation you have, the whole chapter of Mark 16 is cut in half in one, or you might consider it as doubled in the other. And so there's a fairly sizable difference in that chapter. We'll talk more about textual variance and how people, what Bible interpretation looks like. But this abomination of desolation, and he mentions that it's spoken of by Daniel. And by the way, this isn't something we have to wonder, did Daniel speak of this? There's actually four references to this phrase, abomination of desolation, in Daniel. And actually, if we go back to Matthew, in all translations, Matthew actually mentions explicitly in the same account, Daniel, the prophet.

But here's one of those verses, one of those four verses that is spoken of in Daniel. Daniel chapter 11, verse 31, it says this, and forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress.

Then they shall take away the daily sacrifices and place there the abomination of desolation. Now, Jesus is, he's just giving a very brief one sentence mention of this abomination of desolation.

But there's actually, if you go back and read through Daniel, you'll see a lot more details about what's going on. And the big picture is, is that there will be some figure who will, who will enter into the temple and bring in, there will be, as it says here in this verse, forces will be mustered. There'll be some kind of army, and there will be actually a surrounding of the city of Jerusalem. And somebody will enter in, and they will desecrate the temple.

[31 : 48] And this word, abomination, is used many times throughout the Old Testament, and probably 90% of the time, it's a reference to false gods, to idols. And so, it's pretty clear that that's what's going to happen here.

And then a desolation is anything that makes desolate. The word literally means to, like, empty. But it's used many times figuratively for destruction, to lay waste.

So, there's this event that's going to happen in which there will be this abominable idol set up in Israel's temple. And it will be this thing that causes tremendous destruction.

It will be the starting point of tremendous destruction. And we'll see, there's warnings given about that. But the first thing that will happen, and we'll see this in Daniel, is that sacrifices and offerings will be brought to an end. So, that's interesting, right? Because today, are there any sacrifices done in Israel? And if you're not really familiar, you might not be sure. Well, I mean, sacrifice is a part of Israel's system. Maybe people are sacrificing sheep and goats, you know, in their homes over in Israel. But actually, God, that's not how sacrifices worked, even in the Old Testament. There was only one place where sacrifices were to be made, according to the law of Moses.

And where was that? In the temple. And this temple was this hugely important location for the nation of Israel. You don't just willy-nilly make sacrifices to the Lord. God gave commandments on how these sacrifices were to be made. And if you were to make an annual pilgrimage, every family, household, was to make an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem and to the temple to make these sacrifices.

[33 : 40] We were talking about this morning in Daniel, when the first time the temple was destroyed, there were no sacrifices after that. And it wasn't until the temple was rebuilt later on, we read about through Ezra and Nehemiah, that these temple sacrifices were started up again.

And so you can see why the temple is so important to the religion of the Jews. Without it, they can't offer their sacrifices to God. And that's how they receive forgiveness of sins, through those sacrifices. So in the future, there's an indication here that the sacrifices will be put to an end. Well, what does that mean? Because since the time that this temple was destroyed in 70 AD, about a generation after Jesus rose from the dead, this temple was destroyed, since that time, there have been zero sacrifices. Even though Israel as a nation or the people of the Jews have continued to propagate throughout history and maintain their identity, but they have not been able to offer any sacrifices even to this day. So there will come a day at some point in the future where this temple, and so there's a lot of people kind of get excited about that, because it could be an indication, right, when those temple sacrifices are restored, well, that we're that much closer, right, to these things coming to pass. So at that time, the sacrificial system will be in place, but then it will be brought to an end again, just like it was before, because of what happens here. There's actually, many Jews look at a previous event that happened about, I think, about 160 years before Christ that they considered to be the fulfillment of this, and I'll just speak to that briefly. There's actually a book in the Catholic Church, they actually accept additional books in the Old Testament that are called the

Apocrypha. The Protestant Church historically has not accepted those books, but there is a book called the Book of Maccabees. There's actually, I think, the first and second book of Maccabees, if I remember correctly. But that's actually a history of what happened between when the Old Testament ends and when the New Testament starts. And it actually is very interesting historically, even though we don't consider it to be a part of Scripture. But it gives the account of one of the Greek emperors, his name was Antiochus. And he had this dispute with the Jews and actually sent some mercenaries, kind of undercover, under false pretenses, to go into Israel, and then they attacked the city. And during that time, after they attacked the city, they desecrated the temple. And they actually brought in an idol to their god, Zeus. An idol of Zeus. And they set it up in the temple of God. And they offered sacrifices to that false god. And there was, ended up being a revolt against Antiochus, and the Jews were actually able to gain some. And that's kind of their revolt and subsequent, the nation that they kind of built after that, is actually the context for which Jesus is ministering in Judea as we're reading through the

Gospels. But many Jews actually look back as that's the fulfillment of what happened, because something, an idol was set up during that time. Jesus doesn't mention anything about who's actually doing this.

But there are lots of scriptures in Daniel, in Paul's writings, and in Revelation that actually speak of more detail about this, and who's doing all this. And if you're at all familiar with end times prophecy, or apocalyptic literature in the Bible, you've heard of the Antichrist.

[37 : 51] And that is the one who is at the center of this thing that's happening. Jesus doesn't give him a name at all in any of his writings. He doesn't mention the name of anybody like this. But Daniel calls him the prince of the people. That's the name that he uses. The prince of the people is the one who is involved in all of this. In the book of 1 John, John calls him the Antichrist, and that's where we get that term that we often use. In the book of Revelation, which is also John, he makes reference, and he uses a lot more figurative language, but he mentions this character called the beast. And that is a reference to this same person, the Antichrist. Paul actually calls him, in his writings, he calls him the man of sin. And so some people are a little bit confused, and they're not sure whether these are all the same people. And I take the view that this is all talking about the same person, the Antichrist. But this is somebody who will basically set themselves up as God and defile the temple by accepting worship in

God's temple in Israel, or in Jerusalem specifically. 2 Corinthians chapter 2. If you have your Bible, open it up to 2 Corinthians chapter 2, because there's actually a lot of detail here that Jesus doesn't provide, just to provide a little bit more context about what this is going to be like, what's going to happen. And I think this is probably the most succinct passage that gives us some insight into what will happen. A lot of figuring out end times prophecy can be challenging, because there's some details here and other details here, and it's kind of like a puzzle. And so it can be challenging to fit all those puzzle pieces together. Verses like this, I think, really are helpful to put these puzzle pieces together. They're like the secret key or whatever. But here's what Paul says in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, which, by the way, I think is a reference to the rapture, which will happen right before, we ask you not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. You see, they had been, there were some people going around saying, oh, you know what, Jesus has already come. He's like, no, guys, listen, when

Jesus comes, you're going to know it, believe me. Don't listen to these people. Jesus isn't coming in secret. It's going to be broadcast across the whole globe. Let no one deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first. This is what we're reading about in the tribulation. There's going to be deceptions. Many people will fall away. And the man of sin is revealed. There's that reference to the man of sin, the son of perdition. That's the other name given to him, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. And so when we look at this seven-year period, there's going to be kind of a ramp up. And there's references throughout the apocalyptic literature about nations fighting. But then there's going to be someone who's going to basically bring all the nations together. And this person, all the nations will look to as a Messiah figure, a Savior, who's going to save all of our worldly conflicts. If we just look to him, and that is this anti-Christ spirit, a Savior of sorts, who is anti the actual Messiah, the actual

Christ. But he's going to accept worship, and many people across the globe will give him that worship. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. So he's saying, hey, this is, this, this anti-Christ person is a useful figure, but there's, and there's this, the Bible talks about many anti-Christ, but there will be one major anti-Christ figure, but there will be many anti-Christ figures both before and I even think during this, this period. But he's, he mentions this restraining, this restraint that's going on. You see, there are many people across the globe that would love to have as much power as they could possibly have. Is that hard to imagine? We see it in the, in the news daily, right? People vying for power all over the world. And so it's not going to take much, right, for something like this to happen. All God has to do, in many ways, is just to kind of release those restraints. And those things will come to pass. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming. His reign will be short-lived. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan. So Satan will be highly involved with all this, with all power, signs, and lying wonders. So there will be miraculous events, but it won't just be on the side of God's people, but there will be lying signs and wonders. And God will allow for some of that in ways that he does not allow in this day and age. And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. You see, the deceptions will come, and the deceptions are intentional. It's a way to divide the sheep and the goats. Because some people are deceived because they don't love the truth, but they love lies. Because lies, a lot of times, are more convenient to the way that I want to live. I want to live a certain way, and so there are many lies that you can tell yourself to justify the way that you live.

So just a few questions. How will God bring this to pass? You know, there's a mention here of a restrainer, something restraining. And some people say, well, that's the Holy Spirit in God's church.

[44 : 23] And some people would say, hey, when the rapture happens, and the people of God who have the Holy Spirit in them, they're taken out of the way. Well, that's when the restraints will be released, and maybe that's part or even all of it. But then, and we see this throughout the Old Testament, God has used wicked nations and kings to judge his people, right? We see that over and over again in the Old Testament. And it's not that God is putting evil in these kings' hearts. Does God do that? Does he put evil in people's hearts? Never. Never. God is a good God, and he does not tempt anyone with evil, the Bible says. But if there are evil men in the world, is he willing to use them for his own ends? He certainly is, and we see that throughout the biblical record. Proverbs 21, verse 1 says this, the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. Like the rivers of water, he turns it wherever he wishes. Kings want power. They want all these evil things. And so God can direct their hatred or their lust for power towards a certain ends. He says, okay, here's an evil king, and I actually want him to bring judgment on my people Israel, so I'm going to just turn that evil heart towards my people.

And ultimately, I'm going to judge, not I'm judging my people, but I'm also going to judge them because it's their evil heart that is behind all that. And it's the same thing with the Antichrist.

The next thing that he mentions is when you see this thing happen, and this will be, I'm sure, worldwide news that the temple in Israel has been taken over by this guy, and he's basically accepting worship from everyone. That's going to be big news. Everybody's going to know about it.

And Jesus is saying, when you see that happen, this put on your seat belt and get out of Dodge right now. This is what he says, going back to verse 14.

Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, get out of the city, get out of even the countryside, go into the wilderness, into the mountains. He continues on, let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house.

[46 : 52] And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. Listen, when this happens, you're not going to have time to even go back into your house. To go get your clothes, you're not going to be able to pack your things. Leave immediately and get into the wilderness in order to save your life. Because apparently what is going to happen is when this man of sin presents himself as God, as Messiah, the next thing in his plan is he's going to, and we see this today, you know what he's going to say? You know all the problems we've been having?

You know whose fault it is? It's those filthy Jews. We see that today, over and over and over again. We've seen it for thousands of years.

The Jews have been accused of being behind all kinds of nefarious things and being the fault of all the problems in the world. It's those Jews. And this man, this Antichrist, that will also be his message. And so in order, we'll go out to hunt them down, especially those ones that believe in Jesus.

We need to hunt them down and kill them, throw them into prison, torture them. And so Jesus is saying, leave immediately because the hunt is about to begin.

Verse 17, but woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days. And pray that your flight may not be in winter. He's basically saying, hey listen, this is going to be such a difficult time. If you are somebody who's in a more vulnerable position, like a nursing mom or a pregnant mom, it's going to be especially difficult for you. And because you're going to be traveling outside, you know, when you're pregnant, when you're nursing, like the comforts of home add a lot, right? When you have to live outside and travel long distances and avoid, who's the enemy? Who are the people who are going to help me and who are the people that are going to be trying to kill me? I don't know. We've seen some of these kinds of things in communist countries, right? Who's safe? There are going to be people who are going to pretend to be Christians at that time. As we've seen in communist regimes, they pretend to be Christians. And then when you least expect it, they come in with the soldiers. And this is just a reminder too, that women, especially those who are pregnant and nursing, taking care of children, which is one of the most wonderful things in all the world, and what a tremendous privilege that women have to basically bring new life into the world and to nourish little baby boys and girls. But it does put them in quite a vulnerable position, right? And women in general are much more vulnerable to danger than men are. And just a reminder to all the husbands, especially out there, that the world that we live in, you know, it's much safer here than in many parts of the world. But there are still dangers. And that we as men, especially as husbands, need to be looking out for our wives because of the vulnerabilities that they experience in life. I pray that your flight may not be in winter. Why? Because, well, in wintertime, it's harder to travel. It's harder. A lot of these people are going to be sleeping outside. If it's in the wintertime, I mean, in Israel, it's not as cold. Winters aren't as harsh as Ohio. But still, it can get below freezing. And they didn't have these thermal sleeping bags that we have today back in that time. And maybe, you know, when this happens in the future, they will have those things. But, you know, you're going to be, you're not going to be able to pack. So people will be living probably outside under harsh conditions if it does happen in the wintertime. Verse 19,

[50 : 53] For in those days there will be tribulation such as not been since the beginning of the creation, which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. Tell you what, because of time, I'm just going to end it right there. And we'll pick up where we left off. But I would like, you know, this is some challenging things. If we could get a microphone. I don't know if there's questions that have come into your mind or thoughts. But I want to go ahead and give some time to that instead of continuing on. We can pick up next week. And I'm not going to promise that I have any good answers.

But if you do have questions or thoughts, we'd love to hear them. And if not, that's fine too.

Thank you. Okay. All right, Joe. He's going to be the...

I think you did a real good job of kind of highlighting distinctions. But I think it's just helpful. As I was sitting here earlier on, it's a time of Jacob's trouble.

Yeah. And it made me think of, actually back, I don't know, when Marv was going through Revelation, when he talked about the danger of replacement theology, right? And just how it's important to distinguish the difference between Christians today and Israel. And that, you know, we're not all lumped in together in that sense, right? We're lumped together in a sense that we're all, we all belong to the Lord.

[52 : 36] Yes. But there is a difference. And it's Jacob's trouble, and it's Jerusalem, and, you know, I don't know what's going to be going on in the rest of the world. But just keep that, I guess, distinction in mind when you look at all the tribulation stuff. So, just a good thought.

Yeah, without a doubt. I think the biggest distinction that it's important to make is this difference between being under the law, which Israel was under, and then being under grace. Those are two very different ways of living and relating to the Lord. And, you know, they're both legitimate. God had one for Israel for a time, and for us, he has us under grace.

They're both legitimate. But, you know, when God expects us to live under grace, we shouldn't live under law. In fact, the passage, the memory verse that we read, the verse right after that says that I do not, what's the, I do not reject, or I can't remember the exact phrase, the grace of God. For if righteousness comes through the law, then Jesus Christ died in vain. So, anything else? Otherwise, we can wrap it up.

All right. Well, thanks, everybody. Was that helpful at all? There's a lot of details, and it can be very confusing, and I'm doing my best to try to explain as many things as I can, again, from my perspective. And again, with a spirit of humility, I think, you know, there are certain things I could easily be wrong on, but this is the way that I see it, and I think a good way to approach the scripture. Dispensationally. That's a big word, but that's the approach that we're taking is a dispensational approach to these end-time things. So, let's everybody stand, and I'll pray as we dismiss. Father, we love you. Thank you for your word.

Lord, you gave us these things because you wanted us to know about them, and so we're digging in, trying to understand the best we can, and I pray that we are understanding to the extent that you want us to understand these things, so that we might be comforted and also be prepared for anything that we might need to be prepared for. But especially that we're grateful, too, to know that you have already conveyed us into our kingdom, into the kingdom of the Son of your love, and we're so grateful for that, that we can experience that as a settled truth. You've qualified us. We don't have to qualify ourselves. We just have to trust in you, and we thank you for that in Jesus' name. Amen.