

# Jesus on the End Times, Part 7 and Q&A;

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] into the questions. But this whole thing, you know, like we mentioned last week, Springfield has been in the news because of this somewhat of a crisis. It's been a real challenge with all the immigrants from Haiti. And those challenges are very real. I've talked to many people here at the church who have had experiences, both, you know, some just, you know, interesting experiences and some, you know, negative experiences. And of course, that can happen with any population. But, you know, there has been, you know, one of the things that has been brought up, there's been a huge stress in this area in Springfield and I think surrounding areas also on some of the systems that we have. It's been, housing has been a problem and some of the job and family services systems have been overstressed. But just a kind of a few notes, as Christian believers, how should we respond to this? And there's kind of more information kind of coming out about kind of where this is coming from. And I don't know that it's totally clear, but I think it's becoming kind of more clear. You know, it's become somewhat of, because this is an election cycle, things tend to be, you know, more, I don't know, sensationalized a lot of times.

But there are real problems. But one of the things I want to warn against is we should not be raging against people from Haiti because they're here. For, as far as I can tell, for the most part, these are people who are here because they have, they, they're coming from a very troubled country. And they're finding some form of peace and safety here that they do not have in Haiti. And I don't know if you keep up with the news, but Haiti is being overrun with violent gangs. And huge parts of Haiti are run by gangs and not by government. And, you know, it seems like Haiti has a pretty corrupt government. And that's probably why things are so bad there anyway. And so their plight truly is horrific. And so I think we should, we need to be thoughtful about that. Really, I think our ire, our frustration should be focused at the officials, the politicians, the ones who have really, whether it's through mismanagement and a lack of wisdom, or as it sometimes seems, intentionally trying to create chaos or whatever the case may be, regardless of what it is. I think, you know, we should focus on those things. And I think it is certainly legitimate to voice our concerns about what's happening and how overwhelming it is. But focus those on leaders, people who are either causing the problem or not having the wisdom to deal with it correctly. And not focusing anger against these people themselves. Now, among the Haitian population, just like among the population of people who have lived here all their lives, you have people who, you know, are trying to do the best they can, you know, being good to their neighbor, and then those who are criminals and doing bad things and doing things that they shouldn't. And so that's certainly happening among the Haitian population, just like it's happening among the rest of the population here in Springfield. So it's not that everybody is an angel. But at the same time, it's really, we shouldn't completely, what's the word

I'm looking for, attack an entire group of people, right, because of certain things that are being done by a few, just like we wouldn't want people to do that to us. There is some scriptural, there is one scripture I'd like to point out that it addresses the nation of Israel. And this is from the book of Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 9, verse, or excuse me, chapter 19, verse 33. And this is part of the law of Moses. And this is really before Israel entered their promised land, this law was given. But it was an indication, this was part of the law, on how immigrants, foreigners, what the Bible sometimes calls strangers, how they should be treated in this land that was to be an Israeli land.

A land for Jews. But how should they treat people who are living there who are not Jews? And this is what it says in Leviticus 19, 33. And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. And so his intention was, hey, these people might be different, they might even have a different religion

from you. And yes, as you read through the law, they need to keep the laws too. You know, if somebody murders, and he's, like for example, for murder or stealing, a lot of times, in the law, it will say, you shall treat, basically, the citizen and the foreigner the same. Both of them need to uphold the law, basically.

But to show love for them just like you would for your own countrymen. And so I think we need to look at this and take this seriously. So there's lots of problems. I think for the most part, it's probably not their fault. In fact, it looks like there's a lot of exploitation happening. And I think more might come out about that in the future. But we'll see. So we'll leave that at that.

[6:07] Okay, let's, let's open up to Mark chapter 13. And we're going to wrap some things up here. I think I kind of rushed through because of time's sake, the end as we were going through Mark chapter 13. And I, I got a few comments about some things that I kind of skipped over. So we're going to, we're going to go through them. And then we're going to get to your questions.

So I'm just going to read this last part from Mark chapter 13, verse 32. Just so that we can kind of have the context as we go through here. And so Mark 13, 32 says this, but of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the sun, but only the father. Take heed, watch and pray for you do not know when the time is. It is not like a man, or excuse, me. It is like, it's like a man going to a far country who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to each his work and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming in the evening at midnight, or the crowing of the rooster or in the morning, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all watch. So I had mentioned last week as we were going through this, that there were two controversies in this section, a little bit before this, and then in this section itself. I forget, what was the other one? Oh, Jesus said that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things happen.

And so that really gets into a controversy of when will these things happen? Did they already happen, or are they still happen in the future? So we already talked about that last week. But then the other controversy that comes up, or really something that throws a lot of people for a loop, trying to understand, is this whole question of Jesus said, it's not for you to know the day or the hour.

No one knows, not even the angels, not even, he says, the Son, but only the Father. And so for a lot of people that causes some confusion or a challenge, well, how come Jesus doesn't know? The Father knows, but Jesus doesn't know. And so why is that the case? And some have said, well, this here is just more evidence, you know, that Jesus is not really God. You know, he's just a man, or maybe even a special man, a special created being, but he's not God himself. We've actually done messages on that in the past showing through the Bible that Jesus is certainly God made flesh, as John says in his gospel, that he was the Word made flesh, that he was with God from the beginning, but then also says he was God. He was God from the very beginning as well. So there's the skeptical view that, well, this is just another proof that Jesus is not really God. The other, another view, and this is probably the most predominant one, I think, in looking at commentaries, because when you look at a commentary on this passage, everybody kind of says, oh, you know, everybody, people struggle with this, basically. But this is really a view about the incarnation. The incarnation, it's a big word, it's a theological term, it's not a biblical term, but the incarnation is how we describe how God became man. The incarnation, it's a, I don't know, is it Latin, probably, but becoming flesh, carne, you know, the Bible says God became flesh. And how in the world does that work? How does God become flesh?

The Bible teaches, it seems very clearly, that Jesus is both God and man. And not even that he's half God or half man in some kind of way, but that he is fully God and fully man. And people have debated this over the years, especially early on in Christianity. And there are confessions and creeds that really, and there have been debates and councils throughout the years that have addressed these things. But it's still a challenge to understand. And so some have said, well, in this case, this is just Jesus is kind of expressing his humanity. There are things in his humanity that he does not know. But in his divinity, he does. And so, well, that's really kind of hard to understand.

[10:36] And does he separate his divinity from his humanity? There's another passage I'll look at that kind of talks about this just briefly. And this is in Luke chapter 2. In Luke chapter 2, it's the beginning of the gospel of Luke about the life of Jesus. And Luke chapter 2 is about Jesus growing up.

And it says this, Luke chapter 2, verse 52, it says this, And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.

Jesus, as he was growing up, he increased in wisdom. He grew in wisdom. Now, if he's God, how can he grow in wisdom? But if we think about it, right, you can imagine Jesus was born a baby lying in a manger. So many of us at Christmas time set out that scene, the little baby in the manger. Did that baby, you know, do babies typically have the same kind of knowledge that adults do? Well, no. Did Jesus as a baby have the same knowledge that Jesus had before he became flesh? Well, in a lot of ways, well, no. I mean, he's just a baby growing up.

But it says here that he grew in wisdom. Jesus himself grew in wisdom. So there is some aspect in which Jesus grew. And there's things that he didn't know that he grew to know and understand. How to really understand that is, I think, a challenge. But, and so that is one view, and I think it's a legitimate view kind of to have, though it still is difficult, even if it is somewhat of an explanation. I don't know how satisfying it is.

[12:18] Maybe to some it would be more satisfying than to others. But I'll take, I think that view is legitimate, and there's definitely truth there. But what I think this is getting at when Jesus says that neither the angels know nor he knows is something, something a little bit different.

And that is, what it seems to me is that the timing of when these things will happen is not something that has been decided yet. That there is a decision that needs to be had coming up in the future that the Father himself is the one who's going to decide. Remember that we had talked about, there's a reference in this chapter here about there possibly being a shortening of the tribulation. And I think that will happen kind of on the fly, if you will. And I'm going to point to another scripture to kind of back up this view. If you turn to the book of Acts, chapter 1.

Book of Acts, chapter 1. The book of Acts is where we start looking at the history of the church right after Jesus leaves. Jesus ascends into heaven right after his resurrection, or what is it?

Is it 40 weeks? Was that the time period, I think, between his resurrection and his ascension? Just a matter of months, really. And really, I mean, this is, all of the discourse here is right before his crucifixion. So really, what we're about to read here in Acts, Acts chapter 1, is just a matter of months later. Let me see if I can find it here.

Acts chapter 1, and we'll start with verse 6. Therefore, when they had come together, they asked him, this is his disciples asking Jesus, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

[14:22] This is talking about the same subject matter, right? Because when Jesus returns after the tribulation, the things that we've been studying, that is the time in which he is going to restore Israel to their land and to their nation. So they're asking, and it's what Jesus was talking about before, what's the timing? Are you going to do it now? Because we're ready. We'd be thrilled if you come and do this now. And this is what Jesus said. He said to them, it is not for you to know times or seasons. So sorry to disappoint you, but it's not for you to know exactly when. Which the Father has put in his own authority. So notice how he phrases that, that the Father has put in his authority. This is something that the Father, as separate from the Son, Jesus is the Son, but the Father has put this in his authority. And I think what he's saying is, this is something that the Father will decide. Maybe he has decided, right? And he hasn't shared that with anybody else. But I think very possibly he hasn't decided yet. But it is in his authority. He's the one with the decision-making power when it comes to when these things will happen. So that I think is another reason, another possible reason anyway, as to why Jesus would say that even he doesn't know when the day or the hour is going to come for these things to happen. Because God's going to make a decision at some point. Now, what we've taught here is that for us, in this age of grace, we will be raptured away. And then these things will begin. And there's a reference to when that's going to happen in the Bible. It says, when the time of the Gentiles is complete. When the time of the Gentiles is complete, he's going to graft Israel back into their prophetic program again. And that's when this tribulation stuff will pick back up. And when will that happen? Is there a specific day set?

Maybe. But, you know, maybe God's looking for, you know, things to be a certain way. And then he's going to make the decision. Okay, now is the time. So I think that's definitely a possibility. So that's, those are a couple of different views to consider on that. The other thing was the purpose of the tribulation. So I just briefly spoke to that last week, but there are a couple passages I wanted to share. Why is God going to do this? This seven years of tribulation, the worst time as far as violence and suffering in all of history, the Bible says, Jesus says in Mark chapter 13, why would he do this?

It just seems in many ways just cruel. Because it's not just going to be the wicked who will suffer, but even the righteous. We'll also talk about that in a second. But I just want to give two reasons from the scriptures. And the first one comes from the book of Zechariah chapter 13. By the way, as you read through the Bible and study the Bible, the prophets reading and studying the prophets are probably the hardest books to understand. And so for me, reading through the prophets is just such a huge chore. Because there's so much language that is used that is metaphorical. There are things going on at the time, the history that are really hard to understand who these people were and all that.

But I think it's worth studying. And so I just wanted to point that out. But Zechariah chapter 13. Verse 7. It says this, Zechariah 13, verse 7. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd. Against the man who is my companion, says the Lord of hosts. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. Now what does that sound like? Who is the shepherd? Who is the great shepherd the Bible speaks of? Jesus, our Savior. And so Jesus, the Savior, he was struck, wasn't he? The Bible uses that language for his crucifixion.

Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. And that's what we see happen. Right? And we'll actually study through that as we get through the end of the book of Mark. Then I will turn my hands against the little ones.

[18:35] And it shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord, that two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die. But one-third shall be left in it. And I will bring the one-third through the fire.

And this is what he says. I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. And they will call on my name and I will answer them and I will say, this is my people.

And each one will say, the Lord is my God. And so what he's saying here is the purpose of this is to be a refiner like gold.

You put it through hot, hot fire. And what happens to that gold? The dross, the impurities in the gold, they get burned away. And what's left at the end is a pure gold that doesn't have any blemishes, that does not have any dross.

And that's part of the purpose of what he's doing with this tribulation, specifically with his people.

The ones that he actually loves, the ones that he wants to be his forever.

[19:41] As he ends this passage, they will call on my name and I will answer them. And I will say, this is my people. And each one will say, the Lord is my God. He'll call them his people and they will call him his God.

So people will come out of that tribulation loving the Lord even more than they did before, I think. Malachi chapter 3 verse 2 is another passage in the same vein.

Malachi chapter 3 verse 2. It says this, But who can endure the day of his coming? This is talking about the last days. Who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire. And like a launderer's soap. Similar kind of idea. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver.

He will purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. And so he's looking for them.

[20:38] And you know, as we've been going through the book of Mark, Jesus has been warning, listen, it's going to get tough. I need you to stick through it. Because on the other side, it's going to be something greater than you can even hope or imagine.

But I want to point out a second reason. And this is pointed out or brought out in Isaiah chapter 13. So you can turn there if you've got your Bible. Isaiah chapter 13 verse 6.

And this is talking about the same events. This tribulation that's coming for Israel. Isaiah chapter 13 verse 6. Wail! For the day of the Lord is at hand.

It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will be limp. Every man's heart will melt. And they will be afraid.

Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them. They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth. They will be amazed at one another. Their faces will be like flames.

[21:36] Behold, the day of the Lord comes, cruel with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate. And he will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light.

The sun will be darkened in its going forth. And the moon will not cause its light to shine. Remember these are the signs that Jesus said right before Jesus returns. It's right here also in Isaiah.

And here's the one I want to emphasize. Verse 11. I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity. I will halt the arrogance of the proud and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. So part, like we said, part of the purpose of this tribulation is to refine his people Israel. Hopefully that many, many will come on the other side being refined as gold.

But then another reason here is to punish the wicked. The Bible really teaches that for most of human history, God has overlooked, I'm trying to remember the exact language, it's in the book of Romans, the sins of the world.

[ 22 : 47 ] Has not given people the punishment that is due them. Now when judgment day comes, everyone will receive their final due on the day of judgment.

But this tribulation will be a time in which all those things that God has kind of put on hold, his mercy that he has shown to the world for ages and ages and ages, he's finally going to pour out his wrath on the wicked.

And it's wrath that they deserve, without a doubt. And part of the purpose of the tribulation is that, as it says here, verse 11, I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity.

I will halt the arrogance of the proud and I will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. As you read through the Psalms, you see David say things. Why do the nations rage?

Why is it that the wicked prosper, he says? And we can look around in our day and there's so many people who are just as wicked and vile as can be. And they prosper and they do well and they're proud and they're arrogant.

[ 23 : 55 ] And many of them go to their graves like that and ultimately when they meet the Lord on judgment day, they will not be, I mean, they will be brought low just like here.

But this will be a time when on the earth that will happen to the proud and the arrogant. The last thing I want to talk about is, what about the righteous?

Why would God allow or bring intentionally even the righteous through suffering? You know, how can we kind of, even though we talked about the reason why, you know, is it really fair?

You know, ever since sin entered the world, God has allowed suffering on both the righteous and the unrighteous. That's just been a part of life. And God has seen it in his wisdom that there is value in suffering.

And I don't know that we totally understand it, though I think, you know, we can look at opportunities where we've suffered in the past and seen how we've grown from those things. I think a lot of us can look at how we've suffered, even if we're going through suffering now, how that has helped develop and form our character.

[ 25 : 04 ] I think in the future, when we're with the Lord forever, we'll understand to an even greater degree and we'll see God's wisdom in allowing us to suffer through just, you know, the regular things in life.

Sometimes our suffering is caused by us. Can anybody testify to that? We've done things that have caused our own suffering. But then also, sometimes we didn't bring it upon ourselves.

It was somebody else. Or sometimes it's just some natural catastrophe that brings us suffering. But we'll see the wisdom of it. In Revelation 6.10, I wanted to bring out this verse and then we'll look at another verse in Revelation and then we'll get to the questions here.

But I wanted to show, I want to show the attitude. This is describing a group of people that have gone through the tribulation and they didn't make it.

They were killed because of their faithfulness to the Lord. This is who this is describing. This is in Revelation 6. Revelation 6.10. It says this, These are people, Christian people, believers who have trusted Jesus through death.

[ 26 : 32 ] They didn't count their lives to be, what's, I'm trying to remember the phrase in the Bible. But they did not love their lives to death or something like that, I think is what the scripture.

They were willing to give up their lives, their mortal lives for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of Christ. And they're in heaven and they are, they're still upset, right?

That they were killed. But is there ire, is there anger, is it pointed at God? God, why did you let this happen to me? No, it's pointed at the right people, their enemies, the ones who brought this to pass on them.

And so I think everyone will be that way especially. And I think we should have the wisdom to think that same way even today as we suffer through things in the world. That God is not to blame, sin is to blame in the world.

Adam and Eve brought, you know, sin into the world and it has caused havoc ever since. And God's the one who brought the solution by suffering himself on our behalf so that we might live with him forever.

[ 27 : 41 ] The last scripture we'll look at is Revelation chapter 7 verse 13. And it says this, Revelation 7 verse 13. Then one of the elders answered saying to me, Who are these arrayed in white robes and where did they come from?

This is, again, the book of Revelation. So there's all kinds of revelations happening. And he said to him, Sir, you know. So this is some kind of angel or something who's giving this vision and he's asking him, Who are they?

And he's like, I don't know. You tell me, basically. So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore. The sun shall not strike them nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Isn't that comforting? God's going to make everything new. Those who persevere through this time, God will make it worth it without a doubt.

[ 28 : 54 ] So that wraps things up. I hope that tied up some loose ends for everybody. I know there's a lot of content there and some of it, you know, challenging. But I did receive some questions.

I've got three here and then somebody gave me some this morning as well. So I'm just going to start going through this. But if we could get a microphone ready and we'll have a runner that can run that around if there are any questions from the audience.

The first thing I'm going to talk about is, here's this question, Is the rapture going to happen at the beginning of the tribulation or the end?

So the rapture. The rapture, it's this word. It's not a biblical word. And when I say that, I just mean it's not a word that you'll find in the Bible. If you do a search in the Bible for rapture, you won't find anything.

But it's a word that comes from a Greek word that means to be caught up. And so there's a passage that talks about believers being caught up in the air.

[ 29 : 51 ] And so that's where the word rapture comes from. But there's kind of two major views about the rapture and when it's going to happen. Actually, sorry, three major views. I don't know whether to call them major or not.

I'm not sure how popular they are. But I think probably the most popular one is the position that we take. And it's called the pre-tribulation rapture view.

Sometimes it's shortened to just the pre-tribulation view. And when people say that, it gets everybody confused because, well, pre-tribulation what? Well, it has to do with the rapture.

And then people shorten it even further and they say, are you pre-trib or post-trib? And you're like, what does that mean? Pre-trib and post-trib? But that's kind of the language that you'll find as you study these things or get into them more.

And so if you look at that sheet, in fact, did I keep one? Do we have any more of those sheets? Go out so I can reference it. I think I forgot to keep one for myself. Thank you. So these two top charts here, timelines, I guess, if you will, the blue one, it says post-tribulation millennialism.

[ 31 : 02 ] Forget about the millennialism for a second, but post-tribulation. So post-tribulation has to do with the rapture. Does the rapture come after these seven years of tribulation? And so that's what this kind of illustration represents.

And so if you hold to that view, you would say that all Christians, all believers, will be here when all these things happen. And we'll have to go through and endure through the tribulation.

And so some people, in fact, I saw an episode of, what's the popular guy, used to be on Fox News. And then he got, yeah, Tucker Carlson.

And he was interviewing a guy about the end times. Some country Western singer came up with a song about the book of Revelation or something. He was interviewing him. And this guy, it was really important to him that people like us are wrong.

Or people like, you know, me, I guess I'll say, are wrong. And that it's important for Christians to know that they're going to have to go through the tribulation and they need to be prepared. And so

that was his view and he was very engaged about that or animated about that.

[ 32 : 13 ] But then the red one here is the view that we've been teaching is that there's going to be a rapture. And so there's a rapture in which Jesus is going to kind of come in the clouds, but he won't return to the earth.

He's just going to receive up his people back up into heaven. And that's when the seven years of tribulation will start or about when it will start. And then at the end of those seven years, then that will be the second coming, as we call it, when Jesus will establish his kingdom on the earth. That's where millennialism, the word millennialism comes from. It just means a thousand years. And the kingdom, as Revelation says, is going to be for a thousand years. And so there are scripture verses that speak of Jesus coming back.

And for those, so let's turn to 1 Thessalonians 4.17. 1 Thessalonians 4.17. And we'll look at this verse. And I think we already looked at this a few weeks ago.

But we'll look at this again. 1 Thessalonians 4.17. You've got to find it. I guess that'll give everybody else time to find it, right? So this is a passage in which Paul is talking to the Thessalonians and giving them comfort about people who've died and passed away.

[ 33 : 37 ] And he's talking about what they should expect for those who have died and fallen asleep, as he uses that euphemism. But where should we start?

Let's start in verse 16. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of an archangel and with a trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up. There's that word. That word caught up is where we get the word rapture.

Together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. And so those who are post-trib would say, this is actually just talking about the second coming, when Jesus is going to establish his kingdom.

And so, you know, as we read through this, and I think we've looked at it again like a few weeks ago. And I can totally understand how you could see that.

[ 34 : 41 ] But especially if you don't make a difference between the body of Christ and Israel as two separate groups, this is really the only way, I think, to read this, is the second coming.

But because we make a difference between the body of Christ, there's a view called replacement theology. Some people who, people don't necessarily like that term, but I think the term that they prefer is supersessionism.

And so if they want us to use a different word, they're going to have to come up with a different one, because that's just too hard to say. Replacement theology is easier. But the idea is that Israel, God had a plan for Israel, but then after the cross, he replaced Israel as a nation with all those who trust in Christ, and he no longer has a plan for ethnic Jewish people.

And so that's what we would refer to as replacement theology. And so then there wouldn't be any different group of people that would be raptured away before this seven-year period, which the Bible calls the time of Jacob's trouble.

And so what we're teaching is, hey, this is the time of the Gentiles. We will be raptured up, and then God will restart up his prophetic program for Israel, and this seven-year period will be a time of Jacob's trial to refine and purify the people of Israel.

[ 36 : 07 ] And there will be, obviously, Gentiles at that time, too, and they will have an opportunity to also come to the Lord, but it will be in the context of Israel and their kingdom and what God is doing through the nation of Israel.

So I hope that's helpful. I figured it would be helpful to kind of re-look at that at the end of what we've been teaching. The second question that I got was, will grace believers, that's us, those of us who will be raptured, will we be part of the millennial kingdom?

So what we've been teaching, right, is that us grace believers will be raptured away, both the living and the dead, those of us who have passed away, and those of us who might still be here when that happens, will be taken up to heaven before all this tribulation and suffering comes to the earth.

But when Jesus returns, will we be with him? Will we come to the earth to kind of rule and reign with him or be part of his kingdom? And here's my answer, maybe.

And that, I think, is the best I can do. But I'll just speak a little bit to this as best I can and provide a few scriptural notes here. So here's a few hints for why that may be true.

[ 37 : 25 ] What we just read here in 1 Thessalonians about the rapture, and I lost my place, so I won't turn there again. But remember, it says, we'll be caught up together with him in the air.

And then it says, and we will forever be with the Lord after that. We'll be with him forever. We won't be separated from him again. That's what it seems to teach, right?

We will forever be with the Lord, talking about Jesus Christ. And so that, I think, is a pretty strong inkling, right? That if the Lord, where's he going to be at the end of that seven-year tribulation?

Well, he's coming back to the earth, and he's going to stay there for a thousand years. And maybe even longer. There's some debate about that, too, after the millennial reign is up.

But he's going to be on the earth, sitting on a throne, ruling over the nations for a thousand years.

And will we be with him? Will we be in heaven, waiting, you know?

[ 38 : 27 ] The Bible isn't totally explicit, but I think this is a pretty strong hint that maybe we will.

Again, I'm not going to die on that hill. But there's, and then there's another verse, what is this?

Oh, yeah, so there is an indication, and this is from Luke chapter 13, that for the millennial kingdom, the people who will be in that kingdom won't just be the people who are left alive, but actually God is going to resurrect people with new bodies, new immortal bodies.

In fact, what it seems to teach, which I don't know how this will work, in fact, it kind of reminds me of the Lord of the Rings and that whole story, but there will be both mortal people and immortal people during that time.

During that time of the millennial reign, there will be people who have already died, but they will be resurrected, they will have new immortal bodies just like Jesus, but then there will be people who had been left there, hadn't died yet, they just kind of survived the millennial reign, and they will continue to have mortal bodies, and there will be people who will die just through natural causes and probably other things, too, during that time.

But then there will also be the immortal who will be raised from the dead. Here's a scripture verse that points to that. Luke 13, 28 says this, There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, and he's talking about when Jesus returns, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and yourselves thrust out.

[ 40 : 01 ] Sorry, the context of that, he's speaking to the Pharisees, saying, You guys are rejecting me, you're rejecting the message that God is sending you, and you're going to be cast out of the kingdom. And you're going to see, you're going to watch with your own eyes, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, they'll be risen from the dead, resurrected, and they're going to enter the kingdom, and you're going to be thrust out.

So that's another kind of indication, because people will be risen from the dead and receive resurrected bodies and live in the kingdom. So maybe that might include us as well.

So something to consider. I'll go ahead and pause. I've got a few more. But are there any questions that are just burning on anybody's mind from the seats?

And I'll give it just a few moments. Otherwise, we'll return to some of these questions on paper. Is this helpful, by the way, at all? I see some nodding of heads.

Okay. Keep thinking if you come up with anything. Okay, here's another one. This is really about modern-day Israel.

[ 41 : 17 ] So as we've talked through this, Israel is going to become the center of what God is doing in the world again here in the future. And Israel seems to be the center of a lot of news today.

And Israel became a nation again in 1948. And the question is, is this a fulfillment of prophecy? Is what happened in 1948 a fulfillment of prophecy? And so I'm going to answer again, maybe, possibly.

And I'll tell you why I would say that. You know, a lot of the prophecy about what's going to happen with Israel returning to their land does not seem to indicate that that will look like what we see today.

So what we see today is Israel has become a nation. But are the people in Israel, are they worshipping the Messiah, Jesus? And, you know, having, are there tons of Christian churches there with everybody going to church and people worshipping Jesus as their Messiah?

No, there's a little bit, but it's a very small minority. In fact, of the people who live in Israel, most, I don't know what the numbers are, but as far as the majority, it's either two groups.

[ 42 : 36 ] One, they're atheist or agnostic, and they don't believe in God at all. Well, there's a huge chunk of people who live in Israel who are that way, and then others who are more like Orthodox Jews.

They believe in the God of the Bible, but they reject that Jesus is Messiah. And many of the scriptures that point to the restoration of the nation of Israel don't paint that picture, right? They paint a picture of, no, this is going to be a time when the people of Israel will turn to the Lord, and specifically, the Messiah. And let's look at a few passages that point to that.

Ezekiel 37, turn there, Ezekiel 37. Ezekiel. All right, somebody help me out. That's after Proverbs. So if you go in the middle of your Bible and turn right a few chapters.

Just before Daniel. So if you find Daniel, you went too far. Ezekiel 37. This is actually a somewhat famous passage.

[ 43 : 41 ] It's the passage about the dry bones. And it's famous, and it's easy to remember because it's quite a visual. And the visual is there's this prophecy or a vision, I think, probably with Isaiah, and he sees a valley of dry bones, just bones everywhere.

And God says to him, can these bones live? And this is another one where Isaiah says, you tell me. I don't know, Lord. What do you say?

And so then the Lord speaks to him and talks to him about how these dry bones can live again. And it turns out that this is a prophecy about the nation of Israel.

Israel, they are dead. They're like bones that are, you know, they're not, they're just, they've been dead for a long time. That's why they're dry. But they'll come back to life.

And let's see, Ezekiel, let's see, 37. Where do we start? So they look at the dry bones, and then verse 7, So I prophesied, and as I was commanded, and as I prophesied, there was a noise and suddenly a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to bone.

[ 44 : 52 ] Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over. But there was no breath in them. And he said to me, prophesy to the breath. So I prophesied, son of man, and say to the breath, thus says the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on those slain, that they may live.

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Breath? Four winds?

Is that reminiscent of anything? If we go back to Mark chapter 13, remember when it says that Jesus will come on the clouds? And then it says this, and did I write it down?

Yeah, Matthew chapter 13, verse 27. It says, and then he will send his angels and gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the earth to the farthest parts of heaven.

And so that's something that's going to happen when this nation is revived. Ezekiel 37, and then verse 12. Let's see, I got to...

[ 46 : 07 ] A great army. And verse 11, then he said to me, son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off.

Therefore prophesy and say to them, thus says the Lord God, behold, my people, oh my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you into the land of Israel.

Then you shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, oh my people, and brought you up from the graves. I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land.

Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and have performed it, says the Lord. And so, like other scriptures that speak about when they'll return to the land, there's this indication that they will be, that God's spirit will be in them.

And that they will turn to him in mass. And even indication, and I'm not sure if this is talking about, you know, metaphorically, they will be taken up from the grave. But we just read, right, that many will be raised from the dead to enter into this kingdom, to enter into the land of Israel when this happens.

[ 47 : 20 ] And so, I think this is talking about that time of the, time of the very end. But I will say this, and let's look at, Okay, so let's talk about it from this perspective.

The Bible teaches, as we've read, that during this seven-year tribulation, what's going to happen in the middle, right in the middle? There will be something called the abomination of desolation, in which the Antichrist comes into the temple, the Jewish temple.

So, in order for these things to come to pass, what has to be in place? The temple. In Israel, in Jerusalem. And so, if, you know, if the Muslims own that land, and they've got their Dome of the Rock there, can that happen?

No, there has to be a nation established right for this to happen. And so, there are things that are precursors that it seems have to happen. And so, I think in that respect, we can say, yes, this is kind of a demand of prophecy, that Israel become a nation first, even before kind of what we read there in Ezekiel will happen.

In Luke chapter 21, verse 24, it says, talking about the end times, and they will fall by the edge, talking specifically about the tribulation, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

[ 48 : 52 ] And so, Israel is a nation now, but there is a time in which their nation will be destroyed, and people will be taken captive, and they'll be led away.

And it'll be during that time of the tribulation. And that's what Jesus is talking about there. During that seven-year period, their nation will be destroyed. And then, that's when, when Jesus returns, he's going to bring them back, both the living and the dead, to their nation to establish them.

Ezekiel 22, verse 17, I'll end this kind of question with this, seems to speak of a time when Israel will be brought to their land before kind of their final restoration.

And here's what it says. Ezekiel 22, verse 17, The word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to me. They're all bronze, tin, iron, and lead.

In the midst of a furnace, they've become dross from silver. Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Because you have all become dross, therefore, behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem.

[ 50 : 01 ] So he's going to gather them into Jerusalem. As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it and to melt it.

So I will gather you in my anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of my wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst.

As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out my fury on you. And again, he's talking to the people of Israel.

And so notice he's talking about he's going to gather them in, in order to what? Bring this kind of turn on the fire. And that is a reference, as we see over and over again, to that tribulation period.

So I think, yeah, very possibly, the establishing of the nation of Israel is an indication of sometime in the future, and we, you know, we can't really know when, but sometime in the future, maybe soon, these things, these things that we've been reading about will happen again.

[ 51 : 15 ] Anything else, anything from the audience before? I got a few more that I received this morning. These are harder ones, so I saved them for last. Oh, okay, over here.

When Mark refers to God gathering the elect, does the elect only refer to ethnic Jews?

Is the term elect ever referred to Christians anywhere in Scripture? Yeah, that's a great point. Yes and yes. So I think that when he's talking about gathering the elect, I think he is talking about faithful Israel, right there.

And that's a term, the term elect, the term chosen is used throughout the Old Testament about God's people. He chose through Abraham, as the children of Abraham, that he would choose them to be his special people.

But as we get into the New Testament and in this age of grace, there is an indication that in this age, anyway, we are the elect of God.

[ 52 : 23 ] Gentiles. Specifically, God chose the Gentiles to be his people. Ephesians chapter 1. If you read Ephesians chapter 1, it talks about our election.

But those, again, are two groups. God has elected Israel, and those are his elect. during that time in which they were his people, and really still are, but their plan, their prophetic program, has been put on hold.

But they will be the elect ones that are in view, that are being emphasized and focused on at that time.

And so I think that passage in particular is talking about ethnic Israel, but the Bible also does talk, speak about us as the elect as well. So, great question. Thank you.

All right, we'll get to these. This is really about a passage in Revelation. It says this. Revelation 3, is it verse 5, I think? It says, He that overcometh, and Revelation, by the way, is a dense book of prophecy and has caused, I mean, there's no end of disagreement on how to interpret it.

[ 53 : 36 ] But we'll look at this. It's about this passage. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

And this is talking about those who endure faithfully through the tribulation, whether it's by giving up their life through death and staying faithful through, regardless of whether they're killed or not, or maybe those who make it all the way through continuing to be faithful.

But he that overcometh, he who endures to the end, as Jesus said in the All of the Discourse, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. White, that just means clothes, white clothes, sometimes spoken of as robes.

And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and his angels. So the first question is, what is overcometh? And I think that just means those who endure to the end. There's a bunch of suffering.

There's going to be a lot of temptation to give up. There's going to probably be temptation to, you know, instead of suffering, you know, maybe you can be given a job on the enemy's side and you can be prosperous in this life.

[ 54 : 51 ] And those people will not be considered to have overcometh or to have endured through the end. And so that's what I think it's talking about. Who is it overcoming? Jew or Gentile? And I think primarily Jews, but there is, the Bible does speak about a reward specifically for Gentiles who are also faithful, especially to God's people.

There's a passage that says, in fact, I think it might be in Matthew chapter 24 or 25, which is the same passage or same account, but it talks about Gentiles and it says, those of you, during this, there's a time of judgment right when Jesus returns, there were those of you who fed basically those who were hungry and clothed those who were naked and visited those in prison.

And some people, a lot of times I hear that quoted as, oh, this is things that Christians should do to anybody, you know, and God will reward you if you clothe the naked and feed the hungry and visit people in prison. But that's not talking about just anything.

That's actually talking about during the tribulation, those especially Gentile people who instead of attacking the Jews, help them out, provide them protection and refuge from the enemies coming against them.

They will be given a reward. And so I think those can be considered those who overcome as well during that time of tribulation. It says, shall be clothed in white raiment.

[ 56 : 19 ] Sounds like future. When will this happen? Well, we actually read that in that passage in Revelation chapter 7 about, and I think that will happen at the end during the marriage supper of the Lamb when Jesus returns to the earth and they'll be clothed in white raiment because they overcame.

I'm going to end with this just to, I always like to because this sounds very, there are things that are different with God's plan for Israel different from God's plan for us.

And one of those has to do with earning righteousness. And really when it comes to these things that must happen with the people of Israel during that time, now the Bible indicates that he will be with them, he will help them to overcome.

He will be right there, but they're on the hook to overcome through this time. And so in Revelation chapter 19 verse 8, we'll wrap up with this. Sorry, I've got to find it again.

This is an easy one because it's the very last book. Revelation 19 verse 8. This is talking about, you know, when Jesus returns and people are rejoicing because of his return.

[ 57 : 36 ] Verse 7, Let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready. His wife is the faithful people of Israel. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

It's their acts, the things that they did, especially during that tribulation period. That will be their fine linen. It was their righteous acts. Now what does the Bible, what does Paul tell us about us and our righteousness?

It's different, isn't it? We don't put any trust in our righteousness. We put our trust in a foreign righteousness, one that was gifted to us.

In fact, what's the verse I'm thinking of? Didn't we memorize one that talks about our righteousness? Not by works which we have, what's that? Not by works of righteousness. Not by

works of righteousness which we have done.

And how does that end? Alright, somebody help me out. That's not by his, is it in the, yeah, Titus definitely speaks to that, right?

[ 58 : 51 ] Yeah, there we go. Not by works of righteousness. Oh, thank you. This is perfect. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

And there's multiple other verses that speak to that. We have been given a foreign righteousness. We have been given a gift of righteousness and that is the righteousness that we trust in. And so, we don't have to, you know, be fearful about a tribulation day that's coming because we have a salvation that is accomplished, that is finished.

It's a finished work because of his gift to us. And so, we can be grateful for that. Are you all grateful for that? Amen, right? Alright. We'll finish up there.

I went over time again, but hopefully that was helpful. Was that helpful to anybody? And this will, we'll finish up our end times messages and we'll continue on in Mark next week.

Alright, let's pray. Father, there's a lot of challenging topics in here and I hope I did it justice. I pray that you continue to work among your people, us, this local body of Christians to understand your word, to understand you, to understand your love for us, to grow in our love for you.

[ 60 : 07 ] We love you so much and we want to understand you better and what your plans are for us and how we can live lives pleasing to you and be more like Jesus in our lives.

And we pray that you would work in us to do that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.