

Jesus on the End Times, Part 6

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[0 : 0 0] Let's open up our Bibles. We are in the Gospel of Mark, and we've been in Mark 13 for six weeks now.

This is our sixth week. Mark 13 is what many call the Olivet Discourse. We started last year in Mark chapter 1, and we've been going through, we're, I don't know, two-thirds or three-quarters of the way through the Gospel of Mark, but we've been in this passage in Mark 13, which is all about the end times. And so this is a tricky subject, the end times, but this is Jesus's basic, his main message, his big message, I guess, on the end times. And as many of you may know, when it comes to the end times, there's lots of different views about what's going to happen in the end, what's already happened and what's still to happen. And will we go through, is there a rapture? Is the rapture a thing? Is there going to be, will we be here for the tribulation, or will we be raptured out before the tribulation? There's the Antichrist and all these different characters that come into play.

This morning, Ron was going through the book of Daniel, and Daniel speaks a lot about the end times. In fact, if you looked at the whole Bible, a huge chunk of the Bible, like a very large chunk, is about what's going to happen in the end. So God wants us to know these things. Now, for some of us, our curiosity may be larger than what he provides, and that's fine.

So he doesn't tell us everything that's going to happen, but he does tell us some things. And so we are trying to do our best as we go through here to try to understand what God wants us to know. And specifically, what Jesus told his disciples here on the Mount of Olives in the last week of his life before his crucifixion. And I think that's interesting too, right? I mean, there's a lot going on in Jesus' final week here in Jerusalem before he's crucified, and he spends the time telling them about what's going to happen in the end. And so he thought it was that important. Just as a quick overview on what we're going to talk about today, we're going to finish up. This is going to be our last message on the Olivet Discourse in chapter 13 here.

But there are actually two pretty big controversies that we're going to look at. Lucky me, right? And they're both related to the timing of when these things will happen.

[2 : 3 5] When will these things happen? And then the other one is Jesus mentions, and he says, the day or the hour, nobody knows. And he says, not you guys, not the angels, not even me. And that throws a lot of people for a loop. This is something that Jesus doesn't know, so we'll talk about that.

And then we're going to also, when we get to the end, just ask the question, why is there a tribulation at all? I mean, this is, as we've went through this, this tribulation, this seven years of just suffering and persecution and calamity, it's just horrific. In fact, as we've read here, the Bible says that this is the worst amount of suffering, worldwide suffering that's ever been seen in the history of the world up to that point and into the future. This will be the worst of the worst at any point in history. Why doesn't Jesus just come back? I mean, there's enough suffering in the world. There's been suffering since the fall. Why this intense period of seven years of suffering? So we'll talk about that just briefly. And then at the very end, we're going to look at comparing, because as we've been going through this, we've said, you know, this is a time of trial for the Jews. It's actually called in the Old Testament, the time of Jacob's trial. It's a reference to the Jews. This is their trial that is intended for them. So for us, as grace believers in this age of grace, how does this compare in contrast to what God has in store for us? And so we'll finish up with that. But we're in Mark chapter 13 and verse 28. So I'm going to read. And it goes, we'll start with verse 28. Now learn this parable from the fig tree. When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near at the doors. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.

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 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, at 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. And that's how he ends this discourse about the end times. Going back to where we started, he gives this lesson about the fig tree.

He's just using this as an example. He said, listen, here's a parable, a story about a fig tree. It's a pretty quick story. We all know how trees work, fruit trees anyway, right? And so for any kind of fruit tree, he gives the example of a fig. But he says, you know, when summer is near, you start to see signs in the tree. There's little buds. The branches become tender. And he's talking about those little buds, those tender buds that, by the way, deer like to eat. We bought a couple of, four fruit trees, I think two apple and two peach trees. And the two apple trees are dead. They failed. But I bought these little saplings. And you know what happened? As they were budding, the little fruit was starting to bud.

The deer came and they nibbled on those little buds. And it died. I guess they don't like peaches for some reason. They just like the apples. And so if we do it again, we'll have to put a little fence or something to protect it next time. But you see those little buds. They're tender little buds.

[6 : 38] And I guess they're delicious to deer. And it puts forth leaves. And you know because of these signs that summer is near. And this is just one, right? There's many signs. There's signs for the fall.

We're starting to see that now with the leaves turning colors and starting to fall. So he's saying, hey, just like you can see signs for the seasons, I just told you all these signs. And we've gone over these in past weeks. These signs, these things that are going to happen so that you will know that the end is coming. That the day of the Lord is coming. And he says this in verse 29. So you also, when you see these things happening, the things that he's just been speaking of, all the signs, know that it is near. And he says this, at the doors.

You know, Jesus, from the very beginning of his ministry, had been telling people all over Israel that the kingdom of God is near.

In fact, he would say the word at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand. This kingdom that was prophesied by the prophets throughout the ages, this kingdom for Israel, in which the Messiah, the Jewish, somebody from the line of David would come and sit on a throne, and it would restore Israel's power, just like they saw with King David and Solomon, that that kingdom was at hand.

This is the whole of Jesus' ministry. And so Jesus is here saying, hey, listen, when these tribulation signs come, know this, that the kingdom is at the door.

[8 : 25] And so evidently, there's at hand, and then at the door is even close. And you can think about somebody maybe coming for a visit, and they're traveling across the country, and they're getting close, and then they might be at hand, right?

Oh, I can see them. I'm tracking them on. We had some family over the other day, and I've got the, what do you call it, fine friends on my phone. Oh, they're almost here. They're just five minutes away. Well, they're five minutes away, and then all of a sudden, where are they?

They're at the door. Knocking on the door, ringing the doorbell, and that's the case here. When you see these signs, the end is at the door. And then he says this, verse 30, Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. So here we get into our first controversy. And we actually looked at this, so I'm not going to get too deep into this, but when we looked at Mark 9, verse 1, which we'll look at in a second, we actually spent a whole message on this whole controversy about when are these things going to happen.

And so we'll just summarize it here. But I wanted to first look at this word, assuredly. Assuredly, I say to you. Now this is from the New King James. We see in other translations, I think the King James says, Verily, verily, I say unto you.

[9 : 53] Some other ones, let's see. Truly, I say to you is another one. So your translation of the Bible might have a different way of saying it.

But it's something that Jesus said many, many times. And it's kind of a funny phrase. Assuredly, I say to you. Verily, verily, I say to you. What is he talking about? Well, when Jesus uses this kind of language, it's actually reminiscent of something that the prophets of old said.

And what would the prophets many times begin their prophecy with? In the King James language, it starts with thus. Thus saith the Lord, right?

Thus saith the Lord. And then they would give their message. This is what the Lord wants you to know. And so what Jesus is doing here is the same thing.

Jesus is a prophet. But instead of saying, thus saith the Lord, Jesus says, listen, this is what I'm telling you.

[10 : 58] I'm not just a prophet. I am the Lord of heaven and earth himself. And so, very interesting. I think there are dozens of times in which Jesus uses this phrase.

But he's saying, listen, I am prophesying to you. This generation will by no means pass away until all these things take place. He's talking about the signs, the tribulation.

So people debate in their camps of, well, the tribulation, these things that Jesus talked about, well, they already happened. Because, well, and it gets down to this word, this generation.

Well, what's he talking about? Because it sounds like to us, at least to me, that when he says this generation shall not pass away, he's talking to the people standing in front of him, the people who are of that generation that Jesus is living in at the time.

But then that would seem to mean that these things must have already happened at that time. Other people say, no, he's actually talking about a future generation because these things obviously haven't happened.

[12 : 01] And so it must be some future generation. When it comes to, and then there are, of course, those who are complete skeptics, who say they're skeptics of the Bible completely and of Jesus in particular, and they say, listen, Jesus said these things were going to happen in his generation.

They didn't happen. So Jesus is just, he's a liar. He was a deceiver. It's not true. And that is certainly, that is certainly not the case.

But there are some who say that the generation that Jesus is speaking of here is the generation that comes after the nation of Israel is restored as a nation.

And that was a very popular view back in the 70s. I think I've mentioned in the past, there was a book called The Late Great Planet Earth by Hal Lindsey. I think it was the best-selling book of the 70s or the 80s.

I can't remember which decade. Some 10-year period in there. In the country. Not just a Christian best-selling book. It was the best-selling book of any book in the whole country, which is pretty incredible.

[13 : 09] But that was his view, was that, hey, the nation of Israel, again, seems miraculous, right? The nation of Israel that has not been a nation for 2,000 years. In 1948, they became a nation again.

When has that happened? Never in the history of the world have you seen a nation who went away and then for 2,000 years, or for any significant length of time, usually after what? One, two, three generations.

A nation that's been defeated and dispersed, they just become part of the other nations. They get absorbed in. They don't maintain their own identity. But the Jews, the special people, have maintained their identity and they formed a nation once again here in 1948.

And so his view was that this generation, and many others, especially at that time, and even today, I think this is a very popular view to some degree, that is when Israel was established.

And so they would look at 40 years. So Israel was established as a nation again in 1948. And so you have 40 years is one generation.

[14 : 14] It's usually a biblical generation. Some people would make it further, right? I think the most I've seen is 80 years, which we just passed up, by the way. Or let's see, have we?

Maybe, is it 19, no, 2028 would be 80 years. But then you have to subtract the seven years of the tribulation too.

So I think we've even passed that up. So where was I going with that? So you'll see these signs when the generation of Israel is, or excuse me, when Israel is established as a nation, it'll be that generation.

But a lot of people were saying 1988, right? 40 years plus, or 48, 1948 plus 40 years is 1988. And others have said, well, no, what he's talking about, he's saying this generation that actually sees the signs that Jesus said, they're the ones that will actually experience Jesus coming back.

And so that's another view. One of the things that we've talked about, and I think why I, even though I'm somewhat open to that view, and as I've said before, by the way, when it comes to end times theology, we need to be pretty humble.

[15 : 40] There's some challenges and difficulties in trying to interpret all these things. So I think we need to approach these kinds of things somewhat humbly because there's lots of different views and sometimes I think people get a little bit too, maybe too uptight about their specific view.

And so we should be generous with people when it comes to this, these kinds of things regarding the end times. But really I think Jesus is talking about this generation.

He's talking to the generation that was standing in front of him. And we'll talk about, well, how can that possibly be? Because I also don't believe that these things actually happened, these signs that he's talking about.

You know, Jesus, it's not just this one verse where Jesus is saying these things will happen to this generation where he seems to be talking to these people.

It's actually all throughout his ministry. Like I said from the very beginning, Mark chapter 1, verse 14. Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom and saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

[16 : 50] Repent and believe in the gospel. From the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, he's saying, listen, the kingdom is here. It's here right now. Repent and believe the gospel so you can enter into the kingdom.

So many of his parables are about what it takes to enter into the kingdom. Mark chapter 10, verse 23, excuse me, this is not Mark. Matthew chapter 10, verse 23, Jesus says this to his disciples, when they persecute you in this city, flee to another.

So he's sending them out to the different cities to preach the gospel of the kingdom. When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, again you see that phrase, you will not have gone to the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Wow. He's saying, you're not going to have time to even get through all the cities in Israel. Now are there three million cities in Israel? There are not. There's maybe dozens of cities in Israel.

And so he's saying, listen, you're not going to be able to get through all the cities. And then what does it say here? Before the Son of Man comes. In Matthew chapter 16, verse 28, which is towards the end of Jesus' ministry.

[18 : 13] In fact, I think it's after the resurrection. Matthew chapter 16, verse 28, Jesus says something similar. Surely I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

Some of you will not even die before you see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom. Now, unless there's a 2,000-year-old apostle somewhere hiding in caves, and I have heard people make that claim, that there's probably John the Bat, John, you know, the apostle's probably out in a cave somewhere, you know, being supernaturally blessed with long life, I guess.

But no, I mean, really, this, so much evidence points to, listen, this is something that's going to happen in this generation. And then Mark chapter 9, verse 1, which is the one that we looked at a few months ago, says this, and he said to them, assuredly I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.

The kingdom of God present with power. That's the same account that Matthew 16 was speaking to. So I guess I got that wrong. That wasn't after the resurrection.

That was before. Until they see the kingdom of God present with power. And as Matthew writes it, until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

[19 : 48] The other thing to note is as we read through the book of Acts, which is a description, the book of Acts is a description of what happened after Jesus went up, ascended into heaven.

And he gave the apostles some instructions to share the gospel with people. And then he went up to heaven and he gave them a mission to preach him basically throughout Israel and then also throughout the whole world.

But notice kind of what was happening at the time. People were selling all their stuff. There was the day of Pentecost in which Peter gave a sermon and they saw the, well they didn't see the tongues of fire, they heard the languages, their own languages from these people that obviously were not from their part of the country.

And what did Peter say? He said, this is that spoken of by the prophet Joel. And what was Joel, he quoted Joel, and I don't have this pulled up, but he was quoting Joel and what was Joel talking about?

Joel was talking about the end times, the very end. So as we consider this, how do we parse this out? And as we talked about in our message in Mark chapter 9 verse 1, there was an initial plan and we read about it in Daniel.

[21 : 08] We've got Daniel's 70 weeks and that all these things would happen and then the Messiah, the prince, would be cut off, Daniel said. He would be killed.

And then, there would be that last 70th week, that last week, which is that time of the tribulation which Jesus is talking about here. It was all supposed to happen right at that time.

I'm going to point to a parable that Jesus told in the Gospel of Luke. You only find it in Luke. But he told this parable, this is in Luke chapter 13 verse 6. And I think this will help us understand what is going on here.

It says this, Luke chapter 13 verse 6 if you'd like to turn there. He also spoke this parable and he said this, a certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down. Why does it use up the ground?

[22 : 17] But he answered and he said to him, Sir, let it alone this year also until I dig around it and I fertilize it and if it bears fruit, well, but if not, after that you can cut it down.

And so this is a parable that I'm sure to his disciples probably caused a bit of confusion. This isn't one that Jesus really explained. But I think it's easier for us to look back just like it is with many passages in the Bible to look back and understand what Jesus is talking about.

How long was Jesus' ministry on the earth or his active ministry? It was three years, right? Three years on the earth. Jesus came preaching the gospel of the kingdom to Israel. Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

And one of the things he was looking for was what? Fruit. Fruits of repentance. He saw a little bit. Remember, it was at Zacchaeus that said, hey, everything that I've stolen I'm going to pay back and I'm going to give even more money to the poor.

He was looking for fruits of repentance and he saw some but not much. And in this parable we see two characters. One is the owner of the vineyard that represents God the Father.

[23 : 31] The other is the vine dresser who I think represents Jesus himself. And the Father is saying, listen, Jesus, you've been doing this ministry with the Jews for three years and I'm not seeing the fruit that I'm looking for.

And so we're just going to cut the tree down. And Jesus responds and says, give us one more year. One more year. And then, if you still don't see any fruit, cut the tree down.

You see, one of the principles in the Old Testament was that God said, I have promises that I'm going to give you. In fact, promises to give you a kingdom to build you up, to plant you in your place.

Jeremiah chapter 18, verse 9, says this. This is part of the parable, if you will, or the story of the potter and the clay. God speaks to Israel in this imagery.

And he says this, and the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build it and to plant it, if it does evil in my sight so that it does not obey my voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit.

[24 : 43] And so I think what we're seeing here is that's what happened. God had a plan for Israel, that there would be a three-year ministry, that they would bear fruit, and that he would complete the plan that he had for them.

But because of their stubbornness, because, as the Bible says, they stumbled over the chief cornerstone, Jesus himself, God pivoted, he made a change.

And we read about that in Romans chapter 11. And Romans chapter 11 is such a pivotal verse in the Bible for us to understand this pivot, if you will, this change from, because one of the things you see in the book of Acts, it's really kind of strange if you don't really understand the story, there's all this focus on the Jews, Jews, Jews, then halfway through Acts, all of a sudden, it's all about the Gentiles.

And there's an apostle to the Gentiles, and he's going to the Gentiles. He tries going to the Jews, and they reject him, and then he turns to the Gentiles. And it happens again. He goes to the Jews, and then they reject him, and he turns to the Gentiles. Romans chapter 11, verse 11 says this, and I say that, he's talking about Israel.

And Paul starts this, by the way, he starts this whole, like, soliloquy, starting in chapter 9, Romans 9, and he says, I love my people, the Jews, and I so want them to be saved.

[26 : 04] But then he talks about how, you know what, God can choose a different people if he wants to, and he talks about how he's chosen the Gentiles. Romans 11, verse 11, I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall, talking about the Jews?

Certainly not. But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. So God did something, and he said, you know what, I'm going to cut off my people, the people that I love, the people that I have loved for generations.

You know, the Bible says that the people of Israel are the apple of God's eye. They're his cherished people. God had this very special relationship with Abraham, and Abraham believed God through some of the most difficult circumstances.

God asked Abraham, sacrifice your own son to me. And Abraham was willing to do it, because he loved and he trusted God.

And I think that really formed just a special relationship between God and Abraham, that God loved him. And he loved his seed, his children, too. And still to this day, he does.

[27 : 16] He just has a special love and tenderness for the children of Abraham. But, because of their rejection of the Messiah, they stumbled over the chief cornerstone.

He cut them off. It says this in verse, Romans chapter 11, and this is verse 17. And he says this, and if some of the branches were broken off, he's talking about Israel, their branches were broken off.

And you, he's talking to Gentiles now, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree.

Do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. Say, God has grafted you into this, into this tree to make you his people, Gentiles, people who were never the people of God.

The Gentiles were never the people of God. It was always the Jews. But now God has made this change. He cut off one people from their promises, from their covenant, and he grafted in another people with some different promises.

[28 : 33] One people, their promises were around the concepts of the law of Moses. But for this new people, now their promises are different. There is no law involved.

There are spiritual blessings and faith. Faith, not with works, not with the law, but faith alone in the blood of Christ and what Christ accomplished on the cross.

But we shouldn't think that that means that this is all said and done. That God's plan for Israel has been stopped and it's put in the trash heap.

It says this in Romans chapter 11, again, Romans chapter 11, verse 24, it says this, For if you were cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, so us Gentiles were from a different tree but we were grafted in, and you were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

[29 : 49] See, Israel has been blinded. Some people, theologians, call it a judicial blindness, part of judgment, but it's temporary. It's lasted 2,000 years, but it's just been a delay in God's plan.

For the time being, God has chosen to offer grace to the Gentiles, and it says here in the same passage, in the same chapter, that he offered grace to the Gentiles, that he turned to the Gentiles to make his people, the Jews, jealous.

And so, God will eventually graft them back in again, and that this timeline of the end times, of the tribulation period, will get restarted back up, and their promises for a kingdom will ultimately be fulfilled.

You see, God's grace to the Gentiles, to us, over the last 2,000 years, will somehow, and I don't totally understand how, but will somehow entice the Jews in the very end, will entice them.

They'll look back at us and God's relationship with us, and it will cause them to be drawn to him in a way that wasn't there before.

[31 : 09] We'll continue on. He says this, heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will by no means pass away. He's just saying, hey listen, this is going to come to pass. Just as, you know, heaven and earth are not something that just pass away on a whim, the whole world, right, the whole heavens don't just burn up on a whim, they're pretty established, but they're pretty permanent, right, heavens and the earth.

We do know that they will be burned up, right, in the future. Peter talks about that, there will be a burning up of the heavens and the earth, but God's word, his word, his promises are even more permanent than even the heavens and the earth.

That's his point. And so despite the delay, Jesus, God, will accomplish the things that he said will happen. It will come to pass.

Moving on to verse 32, but at that day and that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven nor the sun, but only the Father. We'll get into that controversy about, well, how come Jesus doesn't know in just a second.

He says, take heed, watch and pray, for you do not know when the time is. It's like a man going to a far country and he tells a story about a man leaving and he leaves some people back behind to work and commands them to keep watch and he says, watch therefore, verse 35, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster or in the morning.

[32 : 41] And lest coming, suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all, watch. You know, when he's talking about it, a lot of people view this, speaking of the day or the hour, as speaking of all of the end time events happening, the full tribulation.

And I think really what Jesus is talking about here is not when all those things are going to happen, but when, at the end of the seven years of tribulation, because this is what Jesus just described, he said there's going to be seven years of tribulation, right in the middle will be an abomination of desolation, and then at the very last, at the very end of those seven years, Jesus is going to return in power and glory.

I think that's what he's talking about. That return of Jesus at the end of the seven years, no one knows exactly when that's going to happen. When, what day at the end of the seven years is that going to take place?

And he's giving a warning here. He's saying, I want you to watch. Take heed. Watch. He actually repeats it three times. Watch.

In fact, we'll read in Matthew chapter 24, which is a parallel passage. It adds a little bit more color. Matthew 24, verse 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant whom his master made ruler over his household to give them food in due season?

[34 : 05] Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, my master is delaying his coming, and he begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not, excuse me, when he is not looking for him and at an hour when he is not aware of it and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This account of the same Olivet Discourse is quite a bit more severe. It adds more details that show the severity of it.

Jesus is saying, listen, it's important that as you go through this tribulation and you've got to wait until the very end. Don't give up halfway through. Don't give up 95% of the way through.

I need you to be faithful all the way to the end because you don't know when I'm coming. And there will be people that will tell you like we've read here, some will say, oh, he's already come.

Or no, this guy over here, he's the real Messiah. Don't be deceived. I need you to take heed, watch, and pray. He actually repeats it three times in this passage.

[35 : 22] He's warning his disciples, listen, and he says at the very end of this, he says, I say to you and I say to all, everybody, not just you guys, but everybody, watch, keep watch.

I'm giving you a job. This is important. These last seven years are very, very important. You don't get to sit this one out. You have to work. There's actually in Matthew chapter 25, which is a part of this Olivet discourse, Jesus tells two parables that are related to this.

The parable of the ten virgins that didn't provide oil for their lamps, and the other one is the parable of the talents. The three men who received talents and two of them bore fruit, another one, he just hid his away.

And it was a warning. Both of those were warnings that you have to be engaged in the battle. It is so important. And you know what's on the line? The kingdom.

Your entrance into the kingdom is on the line. Really, your eternity. And so, he says, watch, therefore. Just to give a little insight into, he talks about in the middle of the night is when he might come.

[36 : 39] In the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning, the Jews would actually divide up the night shift into four portions, and this describes those four portions. You don't know at which time. We just call it the graveyard shift, or sometimes second shift, and those kinds of things.

They use these terms to talk about four different portions of the morning. I find it interesting that just a few days later, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus goes to pray.

And what does he ask his disciples to do? For one night, watch and pray. He tells them, just that one night, I'm going to go over here to pray.

I want you to stay here. I want you to stand, watch, and I want you to pray. And he comes back, and what are they doing? They're sleeping. What a tremendous illustration of his warning right here.

Listen, if you can't do this for just one night, you're going to have to go through this seven-year tribulation and be willing to give up your life. Endure all the way through the end. So it was an important warning.

[37 : 48] I would like to say this, and we're going to talk more about this in a second. But should we take heed to this same thing? Should we be looking for Jesus' coming?

Yeah, amen. We should be looking for his coming too. Should we be diligent to work for him until he comes? Amen. Yes, we should. If we falter, are we going to lose out on eternity?

No. No. His promises to us are different. In fact, it says this in Colossians chapter 1, verse 13. This is the apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, the one who, he says, was given the dispensation of the grace of God to you Gentiles.

Paul says this to his Gentile converts. He says, Colossians 1, 13, he has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

We today, right now, we have already been transferred. We have already been conveyed into God's kingdom. Now, it's not the same kingdom that Jesus is talking about.

[39 : 02] This is more of the, you know, God's more spiritual kingdom. But we can be confident that we have already been conveyed there. We live there in that kingdom.

And so, it's important for us as grace believers that we have confidence because that's how we live our Christian lives. Confidence in what he accomplished for us already. And so, we shouldn't look at these verses and be concerned.

Well, you know, am I going to make it? Because you can't live a fruitful Christian life in this age of grace if you're constantly scared about, am I going to make it? You know what? You already made it. Under grace, if you're trusting in Jesus Christ right now, you made it.

And we ought to work not in order to receive a kingdom, but because of what Christ already did in us. Because of our gratitude of what he accomplished for us.

Amen. All right. Because of time, I'm going to skip to the end.

[40 : 09] One question is, why would there be this horrific time of seven years of just suffering and trial and catastrophe? I mean, you read through this and then you read through the book of Revelation.

I mean, it's just horrific. And as Jesus said, it's going to be worse than any time in history. But I think it's going to be an opportunity for God to justify his righteousness, his righteous commands.

You know, today, many people, they don't like the Bible, they don't like Christians. Christians are kind of, they're puritanical.

They try to like, they don't let people have any fun. And people think, well, Christians are the problem. If we just got rid of all the Christians, life would be so much better.

They wouldn't be trying to ruin all our fun. I could sleep with whoever I want. I could take from whoever I want. If somebody gets in the way, I could just take care of them. That's how a lot of people think. You know, one day, that will happen.

[41 : 26] The Christians in the age of grace will be raptured away. And right about that time is when this seven years of tribulation will start. Paul talks about it as when, what does he say, something's taken away.

The restrainer is taken away. The restraint is taken away. And what happens when God's restraint that he has had in place for so long when it's taken away and men in the world are just allowed to do whatever they want to fulfill the lusts and desires of their own heart?

We're going to see the worst seven years in the history of the world. It goes back to the days of Noah in which every man did what was right in his own eyes and, what's the phrase?

the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually? It will be like that again, except without the judgment of the waters. And so, you'll see during that time God's law, his morality, his restraint in the world will be justified because all those things will be taken away and people will realize and they'll see what the world is like without God restraining, whether through his people or through just his supernatural hand.

In Revelation 9, verse 20, it says this, this will be the response of people during that time. Revelation 9, 20, but the rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues, it's talking about the catastrophes and plagues, they did not repent of the works of their hand, that they should not worship demons and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood which can neither see nor hear nor walk and they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual morality or their thefts.

[43 : 24] And for so many, they're going to dig in. For so many, they're going to dig in. There will be some that will look to the heavens and look for the grace of God, but many will dig in and they will continue their rage against God all the way to judgment day and I think also beyond.

Let's finish with this because I want to get back to our gospel of grace. Today we live in an age of grace in which God has been so gracious to us, so good to us.

He's done it for a purpose, he says, to make his people jealous. Ultimately, he wants to use us to bring in Israel to their kingdom.

He loves all men. Jew and Gentile. But we have promises in the age of grace. One of our promises is Ephesians 4, chapter 30 and it says this, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you are sealed for the day of redemption.

You see, we are sealed. When we trust in Jesus Christ, what he accomplished for us, we are sealed until the day of redemption. Now that's not going to be the case for these Jews living in the tribulation.

[44 : 40] And then we'll finish up with this. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, is actually talking to his Gentile believers and he's telling them about these same end times.

Because they had heard from somebody, and he's correcting this, he had heard from somebody that they had been told that Jesus already came. The second coming already happened. The day of the Lord is past.

So he says this, 1 Corinthians 5, verse 1. But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

We just read that, right? That's what Jesus said. For when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them. It's labor pains upon a pregnant woman. They shall not escape. He's talking about the tribulation.

This is going to be a horrific time. Like a woman going through labor pains. And ultimately, you know, at the end, you get a baby. Ultimately, in the end, the Jews get a kingdom. But it's going to be, it's going to be hard.

[45 : 42] But you, brethren, he says in verse 4, but you, brethren, you Gentiles, are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day.

We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night. And those who get drunk are drunk at night.

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath.

See, we Gentiles, we Gentile believers, we're not appointed to this wrath, this tribulation, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us.

that whether we wake or sleep, even if we fall asleep, we should live together with him. Therefore, comfort each other and edify one another just as you are also doing.

[46 : 44] Notice how that's not something that Jesus told his disciples. Comfort one another with these words. He didn't say that. The tribulation, this is going to be a huge challenge.

But Paul says that we can comfort one another with these words because our hope, our future is so tremendous. What we look forward to is being raptured up and that we would be with the Lord forever.

For anyone who trusts in him. All you have to do, you don't have to, you don't have to endure through the end of the tribulation. You don't have to, even though we all do suffer, you don't have to suffer through all these things.

You don't have to do a bunch of good works. You don't have to do a bunch of religious rituals. All you have to do is look to Jesus and say, I believe that you died for me. Put your faith and trust in him and that's it.

And you get to look forward to an eternity with him forever. And we get to live out a life based on our gratitude for what he accomplished for us. Are you grateful for the grace that he offered to us that he gives us?

[47 : 49] Are you glad that he hasn't appointed us to these same things that he's appointed the Jews to? I am. Let's end in a word of prayer. Father, I hope I did justice to the scriptures here.

There's some challenging things in here. But I'm so grateful to you for the grace that you've given to us that just by putting our trust in you we can know that we have eternal life.

You didn't appoint us to wrath as you appointed your people, Israel, to you for good purpose and reason and ultimately I think you will be justified in seeing the value. They will see the value in that.

We're grateful that we have confidence that we have eternal life just because we love you and have humbled ourselves before you and trust you and what you accomplished on our behalf.

Even though we didn't work, you did the work for us. Thank you for that in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.