



NG Study Guide: Mark 13:10-23 “Understanding the End Times” (8.8.21)

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: The study of the end times (eschatology) tends to spark curiosity and speculation, however, God’s primary purpose(s) in predicting events to come is to encourage His people and their preparation. Let’s consider the Great Tribulation and get ready.

Context: Jesus and the twelve were on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley, overlooking the glorious temple mount complex. The disciples were impressed by the grandeur of the construction. Jesus predicted that not one stone would be left upon another – a remarkable prediction. The disciples asked when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age (Matt.24:3). Jesus gave His Olivet Discourse regarding the end times leading to the Great Tribulation and the Second Coming, and began by describing the birth pangs: false prophets, wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, famines (Mark 13:1-9).

The destruction of the temple in 70A.D., just as Jesus foretold provides comfort and confidence.

A. Events related to the Tribulation (10-13)

¹⁰ *And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.*¹¹ *But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.* ¹² *Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.* ¹³ *And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

1. The purpose of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 6-18, Jer. 30:7): Judgment of those opposed to God, and preparation of Israel to receive Jesus as Messiah. Revelation 6-18 describe God’s plan. The second-half can be referred to as the Great Tribulation to distinguish from the first-half called the Tribulation (Matt. 24:21).

2. When the Tribulation begins (Dan. 9:27): The signing of a seven-year peace treaty between Israel and Mid-East states, brokered by the Antichrist who will be hailed as a man of peace, which likely makes provision for the rebuilding of the temple (1Th. 2:3-4).

3. The rapture of the Church (1Thess. 4:13-18, 5:1-9, 1Cor. 15:50-54): There are good scholars who are divided on the question of the timing of this event. The most common views are pre, mid, and post-Trib. The rapture is distinct from the Second Coming. The Church is caught up to meet Christ in the air, and instantly receive resurrected bodies. We believe the best evidence supports the Pre-Trib Rapture of the

Church. The rapture shall occur at an unexpected time. We are to live in expectation of an imminent rapture, and the Church is not appointed to God's wrath. There is no event on the prophetic calendar which must occur prior to the rapture (other than the fullness of the Church).

4. World-wide proclamation of the gospel (10):

And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. The Greek term *ethnos* is translated nations, however this is not referring to nation states but people groups (i.e. distinct culture, language, and customs). The gospel shall be proclaimed to all people groups prior to God's judgment. Revelation depicts worshipers gathered from every tribe, tongue, people and nations (Rev.5:9, 7:9-10).

There are approx. 17,000 people groups and just over 7,000 remain unreached. Many of these people groups are Muslim and Hindu and geographically isolated. Advances in technology, travel, and communication have some projecting this goal may be reached by the end of this decade (see, Joshuaproject.net).

5. Persecution of God's people (11-13)

¹¹ *But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.* ¹² *Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.* ¹³ *And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*

Earlier in this discourse, Jesus described persecution of Jewish Christians by councils and synagogues representing Jewish leaders. Here, the persecution of God's people focuses on followers of Jesus *hated by all for My name's sake* (11) and will include Jew and Gentile Christians. Jesus promises the comfort, encouragement, and leading of the Holy Spirit such that believers need not worry what to say (11). The persecution will divide families [12]. Those who remain loyal to Christ reveal faith that saves [13, Rev. 2:7].

Jesus foretold a great wave of global anti-Christian and anti-Semitism preceding or during the Great Tribulation. Open Doors 2021 report re global persecution reveals 340 million Christians (1 in 8) face high levels of persecution and discrimination re their faith; and there was a 60% increase in the number of Christians killed for their faith. They estimate increasing persecution trends.

Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs 2020 Antisemitism Annual Report documents increased global antisemitism.

B. Events related to the Great Tribulation (14-23)

¹⁴ *"So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.* ¹⁵ *Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house.* ¹⁶ *And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.* ¹⁷ *But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!* ¹⁸ *And pray that your flight may not be in winter.* ¹⁹ *For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.* ²⁰ *And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.* ²¹ *"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, He is there!' do not believe it.* ²² *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.* ²³ *But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.*

1. When does the second-half of The Great Tribulation begin?

Daniel 12:11 describes an incident that occurs at the midpoint of the seven-year peace treaty involving the *abomination of desolation* (14). The second-half can be referred to as the Great Tribulation to distinguish from the first-half called the Tribulation (Matt. 24:21).

2. What is the “abomination of desolation”? (14) *So when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not” ...*

Daniel was written in 6th Century B.C. and foretold an abomination of desolation related to the Greek occupation of Israel and fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C. The abomination related to not only slaughtering a pig, an unclean animal, on the altar of sacrifice, but erecting a statue of Zeus, an idol, in the Holy of Holies - *standing where it ought not* (Dan. 9:27, 11:31). Jesus refers back to Daniel as a picture of what will happen during the Great Tribulation, when a false god will be present in the holy place (Matt. 24:15).

Paul describes the Antichrist in the Holy of Holies declaring himself to be God (2Th. 2:3-10), and John describes an idol of the Antichrist in the Holy of Holies (Rev. 13:11-15). The Antichrist commands worship or death, and this event at the midpoint of The Great Tribulation reveals the true nature of the Antichrist. The Bible speak of the Antichrist to warn people not to be misled, not to encourage speculation regarding who he is.

3. There will be sudden intense persecution (14-19):

Those who are *in Judea* (14), the southern area of Israel where Jerusalem is located, are urged to *flee to the mountains* (14). The urgency is emphasized by warnings not to delay by going back home for supplies or clothing (15-16). The difficulty of the persecution is highlighted for the *pregnant* and those *nursing babies* (17). Jesus emphasized the hardship by urging to *pray that the flight (escape) may not be in winter*. Finally Matthew, writing to Jews, records *on Sabbath* (Matt. 24:20).

The sudden and intense persecution of Jews will be unprecedented in speed and severity (19). The city of Jerusalem was horrifically besieged by Assyrians, Babylonians, and Romans. In 70 A.D. when the Roman Legion approached with Titus, many Christians hurriedly fled because of this warning and were preserved, while those who sought refuge in Jerusalem were slaughtered. Similarly Jews were victims of genocide by the Spanish Inquisition and the Nazis in WWII. Yet, the final persecution will be unequalled.

4. God will protect a remnant (20): *And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.* God will limit the period and scope of Judgment to preserve a remnant. They are described as *elect* and *chosen*. Those terms are applied to three groups in the Bible: the Jews (Is. 65:9), the Church (1Pet. 1:2), and Tribulation saints (those who come to faith during the Tribulation) (Matt. 24:22).

5. God’s warning to be ready (21-23):

²¹ *“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘Look, He is there!’ do not believe it. ²² For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³ But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.*

The warning of false christs and prophets (21-22) would be relevant regarding the cults such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons-Latter Day Saints, Jim Jones, and Sun Myung Moon, but primarily the Antichrist and False Prophet (Rev. 13).

Take heed (23) is a warning to be careful, and perceive or understand (see also v.5). Understanding the end times should stir God’s people to preparation, purification, and passion for the coming King.

C. Some practical steps to be ready:

- 1. Commit to Jesus (Lu. 9:23-34)**
- 2. Learn + obey His word (Mt. 28:18-20)**
- 3. A robust prayer life (Matt. 26:41)**
- 4. The power of the Holy Spirit (Ac. 1:8)**

Study Guide Qs:

Q1. When you contemplate the Great Tribulation what thoughts or feelings do you have?

Q2. When you contemplate the rapture what thoughts or feelings do you have?

Q3. If Christians woke up every day expecting Jesus' return, how might life be different?

Q4. How might Christians in America prepare for persecution?

“Digging Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

1. Here is a practical article regarding the Great Tribulation:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Great-Tribulation.html>

2. Here is a helpful take on the Rapture of the Church:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/rapture-of-the-church.html>

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:
[Pray for God to give you boldness by His Spirit to share your faith with family members, and neighbors where you live, work, study, or play this week.](#)

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The “Digging Deeper” section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the “Digging Deeper” section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.