



NG Study Guide: Mark 13:24-37 “The Second Coming” (8.15.21)

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 Second Coming, or return of Jesus, was foretold in the Old Testament, promised by Jesus, and described in the New Testament. Just as the events concerning His First Coming happened just as foretold, the Second coming is likewise certain. Let’s consider the Second Coming and be ready for Jesus.

Context: Jesus’ Olivet Discourse (teaching from the Mount of Olives) answers the disciples’ questions regarding the sign of Your coming and the end of the age (Matt. 24:3, Mk. 13:4). Jesus spoke of birth pains (false messiahs, global wars, earthquakes, famines, troubles and persecutions) and last week we talked about the rapture and Great Tribulation. Today, we will consider the Second Coming.

A. The Second Coming (24-27)

“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; ²⁵ the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Jesus will return as conquering King.

Those days, after that tribulation (24) thus at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation there will be cosmic apocalyptic disturbances resulting in darkness (24-25). This imagery is associated with God’s judgment (Amos 8:9, Rev. 6:12-13). Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory (26, Titus 2:13). The Lord’s return will be personal, bodily, and visible to all mankind (Cf. Ac. 1:11, Rev.1:7).

Jesus’ return and judgment of forces opposed to God, provides hope, comfort, and courage.

Jesus’ return with *great power and glory* is the sign in response to the disciples question regarding the sign of His coming (Matt.24:3, Mk.13:4). God’s radiant glory will transform darkness to glorious light. Jesus’ Second Coming reveals the King of Kings who vanquishes evil (Rev. 19:11-16), who first came to us as a humble infant.

The gathering of the elect (27), presuming the Church has previously been Raptured, represent Tribulation saints, Jews and Gentiles who come to faith during the Great Tribulation (Zech. 12:10).

B. Understand the times (28-31)

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. ²⁹ So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it*

is near—at the doors! ³⁰ Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

The Parable of the Fig Tree (28-29)

Jesus tells his followers to *learn this parable from the fig tree* (28). A fig tree becomes tender due to sap in it, then the leaves become full in late spring. Thus summer is near (28). Jesus was speaking from the Mount Of Olives in spring and the area would have been full of blossoming fig trees. The fig tree is also a symbol of the Jewish people (Jer. 24:1-10, Hos. 9:10). Thus, the restoration of the Jewish people in Israel in 1948, after being dispersed from the Promised Land since 70 A.D., is seen by many as a significant event in the prophetic timeline. *So, when you see these things happening, know that it is near* (29) refers to increasing frequency and intensity of birth pains (false messiahs, famines, earthquakes, troubles, persecutions and world wars)(6-9), and the return of Israel, which may signal Christ's return.

The preservation of the remnant (30)

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place (30). *This generation* likely refers to the Jewish people as a race who will be protected by God until Christ's return (and have been despite unparalleled persecution – Rev. 12); or perhaps the generation that sees Israel return to the land. Thus adding 80-90 years from 1948 you would have a range of 2028-2038 which is very interesting.

The performance of God's word (31)

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Jesus declared that heaven and earth will pass away. Thus, our planet and the celestial universe, which seem so permanent, like the temple (3), will cease to exist. Peter wrote, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with fervent heat both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2Pet. 3:10). In Colossians 1:17, we are reminded that in Christ that all of creation is held together, and He can reorder the universe when and how He chooses. Revelation 21 describes a new heaven and a new earth prepared for our eternal existence. This is a wonderful hope, but Jesus' focus was the assurance that His promised future was certain and true, *but My words will by no means pass away.*

God's word is the most stable thing in the Universe, because God is the only truly stable foundation.

You can be comforted and encouraged that God's promises related to the End Times are certain and true.

The precursors to His return: 10 prophecies preceding the Second Coming:

- 1. Return of Hebrew language (Zeph. 3:9):** Israel post 1948.
- 2. The pure red heifer (Num. 19:2-7):** necessary for purification ritual, and discovered in 1997 (after 1900 years).
- 3. Increase in knowledge and travel (Dan. 12:4):** today you have more information available via the phone in your hand than all the libraries of the ancient world, and can use the device to arrange relatively instant global travel. Journeys of months are made in hours.
- 4. Return of Ethiopian Jews (Zeph. 3:10):** at the end of 2019, over 150,000 Ethiopian Jews are in Israel.
- 5. Rise of global government (Dan. 7:23-4):** The formation of the United Nations as well as regional trade and military alliances make possible a global government (Cf. Response to the rapture of the Church).
- 6. Rise of Russia as a military power (Ezek. 38:2-8):** Russia has become the second or third most powerful military power on the planet during the last hundred years.
- 7. Jerusalem under Jewish control (Luke 21:24):** Since 1967, Israel has had control of Jerusalem for the first time in almost 1900 years.
- 8. Intense Mid-East conflict giving rise to a call for a peace treaty (Dan. 9:27):** Middle-East oil reserves and global dependency on fossil fuels make the regions conflicts a truly important global concern. Iran's efforts at nuclear weapon capacity and declared desire to destroy Israel will continue to escalate tension in the region.

9. Redevelopment of Roman Empire (Dan. 2:32-42): In 1957 The Treaty of Rome creates the European Economic Community (EEC) or “Common Market” which is presently the European Union uniting European States under a common governing authority.

10. Technology to control commerce (Rev. 13:17): The global economy shall be controlled such that no one can engage in commerce without the mark of the Antichrist. This is more than adopting an economic system, but relates to worship of the Antichrist and renunciation of God. The technology exists today, and the global problem of counterfeit currency is an on-going pressure.

C. Be ready for His return (32-37):

³² “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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— ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!”

Only the Father knows when the rapture, tribulation, and second coming will occur (32). We are called to be prepared since we don’t know when (33). His disciples are to (33) *heed* or be careful, *watch* or be spiritually alert (33, 37) *and pray* referring to intimate communication with God (Cf. Matt. 26:41). Jesus then told a parable (34-36). The master-homeowner is Jesus, who departs and gives instructions to his workers to be about his business until he returns. He tells the watchman to watch or stay alert, because he will return suddenly and you don’t want to be found sleeping. Sleep is a picture of spiritual laziness or unpreparedness.

In Matthew’s account, Jesus added the parables of the bridesmaids where the groom arrives for the wedding at an unexpected hour and only those who were ready are admitted, and the talents where the owner departs for a while leaving resources to be used to advance his interests until he returns. When he unexpectedly returns, he commends those who yielded as good and faithful and rewarded them; however those who didn’t use the resources God entrusted to them were rebuked as wicked, evil, and lazy (Matt. 25).

Live your life expecting Jesus’ imminent return, and be about His business (be Jesus’ disciples who love God supremely, love neighbors as self, and make disciples who do likewise).

Jesus concludes, *Watch!* (37). It is an exhortation to be ready, and this is the 5th time Jesus repeated the call to watch (9, 33-37).

Study Guide Qs

Q1. What thoughts or feelings do you have as you contemplate the Second Coming of Christ?

Q2. How might fulfilled prophecy regarding Jesus First Coming provide comfort regarding the Second Coming?

Q3. What might it look like for a believer to live expecting Jesus’ return?

Q4. What advice would you give to help someone be a disciple of Jesus who loves God supremely, loves neighbors as self, and makes disciples who do likewise?

“Disciples Who Dig Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

1. Here is a great read regarding the “unholy trinity” of the end times:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/unholy-trinity.html>

2. A helpful resource on the Second Coming of Christ:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/second-coming-Jesus-Christ.html>

Love your neighbors (inside + outside the group) better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors inside or outside the group?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbors inside or outside the group?

Disciples who make disciples:

1. Who would like to share how they recently sought to make disciples?
2. Here is a disciple making idea to consider for the weeks ahead:

Disciple making often begins *before* someone comes to faith. Engage and befriend neighbors where you live, work, study, play and worship with the hope of seeing them become disciples who make disciples.

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 "Disciples Who Dig Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Disciples Who Dig 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.