

Introduction:

End Times

- clarification: the particular details of this topic are subject to sincere debate where Christians may disagree, agreeably
- Different levels of doctrine
 - Category 1: Primary doctrine
 - Core - The Gospel of Jesus Christ
 - if disagree, then not a Christian
 - Category 2: Secondary doctrine issue (ex: charismatic gifts, adult/child baptism);
 - If disagree, then different denominations
 - Category 3: Tertiary doctrines
 - May disagree and still be in sweet fellowship with others

Context of Passage:

Jesus was responding to a question about end times directly to His disciples.

Mark 13:4

“Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?”

- Jesus’ answer was long because He wanted us to know about what is to come.

Signs of End times (Mark 13:5-13)

- False messiahs
- Wars
- Famine
- Persecution (from government, religious leaders, and other family members)

Passage: Mark 13:14-23

“But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not happen in winter. For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days. And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.

EXPOSITION

Mark 13:14

“But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

I. The abomination of desolation

- Who? Someone who will stand in Temple of God who will commit some kind of atrocious act of blasphemy that is unprecedented
- Points to three Old Testament passages in Book of Daniel (9:27; 11:31; 12:11)
 - Daniel 11:31 (particular historical person)
 - Daniel 9:27; 12:11 (point to another person who will exalt himself as God)
- Here: Jesus is talking about a particular person who is coming but hasn't come yet.

Daniel 11:31 (actual historical person)

Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

- Past historical person (200 years before Christ): Antiochus made a treaty with Ptolemy IV in 170 B.C. where arrived in peace but actually came to conquer and kill many in Jerusalem. Erected an idol in the Temple.

Daniel 9:24-27 (future person to come)

“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.

Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”

“Week”

- symbol for 7 years

“69 weeks”

- Calculated to be 483 years
- Interpretation: Decree of Artaxerxes (when people are able to return and rebuild Jerusalem = Ezra) to Jesus' actual triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey

“One Week” (v.27)

- Note: one more week unaccounted for yet (70th week)
- Subject to debate/differences
 - (already has occurred when Roman General Titus came vs. still to occur because no end to sin or “everlasting righteousness”)
- See Daniel 9, 11, 12
- 70 years still to come that will be triggered by a “new messiah” (Antichrist) who will make some kind of deal with Israel and later reveal to be the “abomination of desolation”

“Israel”

- God uses Nation of Israel as a signpost of God's doings in this world
- Israel was one where people were dispersed away from their land and constantly persecuted
- Now got a chance to come back to their land and create their own nation
- Signpost that shows God's plan and purposes do prevail and will unfold.
- God has a plan for the nation of Israel and uses it as a signpost for both Jesus' first coming as well as His second coming.

II. Persecution

- Starts after “standing where he out not to stand (let the reader understand)” and Antichrist shows true colors

Mark 13:15-20

Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that it may not happen in winter. For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

Perspective: Church will not go through the Tribulation but rather be raptured before 7 years (“Pre-Tribulation”)

Consider:

1. Historically, pre-tribulation is the newest doctrine in the history of the church

- only promoted about 180 years ago (originally by English pastor Darby where later adopted by others like D.L. Moody)
- Contrast: Oldest view of end times where church believed it would go through 7 years of tribulation

2. Biblically, pre-tribulation is not substantially supported

- Church not going through Tribulation is only by inference into Scripture passages (no explicit, clear reference)
 - Ex: Revelation 1-3 mention the church but the church is not referenced thereafter

Pre-tribulation Perspective primarily rely on two main texts: 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

- “Will be caught up together with them in the clouds”
 - note: no mention of timing or reference in relation to the Tribulation.
- Passage only says believers will be taken to the Lord. Does not say believers will not have gone through Tribulation before being taken up.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-4

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

- “Day of the Lord” = a time of persecution but no clear reference in relation to the Tribulation

Point: If believers miss Tribulation, then this seems to contradict other passages about being saved through wrath

1 Thessalonians 1:10

and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

- Key Distinction: wrath of Satan persecuting Christians vs. wrath of God.
- Passages to encourage believers as expect to experience wrath of Tribulation but will be saved through Christ (either be saved through trial or saved unto Himself in heaven)

III. Parallels in Scripture (Mark - Revelation)

- Read Revelation with Jesus Olivet Discourse

Revelation 6

- context: everyone in heaven waiting for someone to open the seals that would trigger the End Times

First Seal: Appearance

Revelation 6:1-2

Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

- Who is the "rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him"?
 - Either Christ or the Anti-Christ
 - cannot be Christ as He already came as Lamb of God and later comes in Revelation 7 in more majesty

Mark 13:5-6

And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name, saying, I am he!" and they will lead many astray.

- The Anti-Christ will allure others away from Christ. Pretend to be a man of peace but truth is opposite.

Second seal: Wars

Revelation 6:3-4

When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

Mark 13:7-8

And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Third Seal: Famine

Revelation 6:5-6

When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!"

Mark 13:8

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Fourth Seal: Death

Revelation 6:7-8

When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.

- people killed because not worshipping the Anti-Christ

Mark 13:9-12

"But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death.

Fifth Seal: Result of Persecution - Martyrdom

Revelation 6:9-11

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

- believers are killed as result of persecution
 - Contrasts "Pre-tribulation" perspective.
- wrath of anti-Christ

Mark 13:19-20

For in those days there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

- why cut short those days? For the elect
- "The Elect" = chosen ones (both Jews and Gentiles)

Sixth Seal

Revelation 6:12-17

When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

- Tribulation = ultimate testing of believers.
- Truth: Trials and testing are part of being a Christian - determine who is genuine and who is superficial

Matthew 3:12

His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 13:30

Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

APPLICATION

Be ready to suffer for Christ

- Suffering is not a question of “if” but “when”
- Are you ready to die for your faith?
- Are you ready to stand for Christ?
- Re-consider perspective that says Christianity will save you from trouble or pain in this world.

1 Peter 4:12-14

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

1 Peter 4:19

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Do not panic or fret

- God is with you and will sustain you.
- Know that suffering and persecution will come
- If not ready, then maybe consider do not believe the right things.
- Re-consider your fear.

Matthew 28:20b

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Isaiah 41:10

fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Hebrews 13:5

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Live as this is your last day

- Question: What would be different if Jesus came today?

Luke 12:20-21

But God said to him, Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

- Live for God and for His glory only (whether you have one day or decades before see Jesus again - either upon physical death or when He comes again)

Mark 13:37

And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

- The end is coming. It is real.

Matthew 24:36

But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

Take the Gospel of Jesus to Heart

Question: Where are you in relationship to Christ?

- Have you asked for forgiveness of your sins from God?
- Have you asked for God's mercy?
 - God wants to give you eternal life and security. Come to Him!