

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for December 3, 2017

Mark 13:14-27
Tribulation and the End

I. The characteristics of the tribulation (13:14-23)

A. The sign of the tribulation (13:14-18)

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. 15 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, 16 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 17 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 18 Pray that it may not happen in winter.

- "But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where he ought not to be (let the reader understand),"
 - Jesus indicates the true and actual sign of the tribulation in the end as "the abomination of desolation"
 - It is a phrase found a few times in the book of Daniel
 - "The genitival relationship between these two elements is best rendered, 'the abomination that desolates.'"¹
 - One usage of the phrase was actually fulfilled in between the Old and New Testament
 - Daniel 11:31 "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."
 - Daniel 11 is a detailed prophecy of the struggle between the Seleucid (North) and Ptolemaic (South) empires
 - Daniel 11:31 highlights a moment when a king from the north will commit an act of such an abomination that it causes the temple to be desolate
 - Sure enough, this was fulfilled by a man named "Antiochus Epiphanes"
 - After gaining control over the land of Israel or the "glorious land" as Daniel call it, he goes into the holy place of the temple, slaughters an unclean pig on the alter, and commits the temple to Zeus
 - The two other places in the book of Daniel that refer to this abomination causing desolation are in reference to the future
 - Daniel 9:26-27 "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

¹ Willem VanGemeren, ed., New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 245.

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. 27 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."

- "And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."
This appears to be the key phrase/event that Jesus is referencing in the Olivet Discourse
 - Daniel 12:11 "And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days."
- What is described by Daniel in Daniel 9:27 and Daniel 12:11 still have not taken place to this day
 - Some will say that they could have when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD
 - However, there was no abomination of the temple that actually took place
 - 70 AD was simply a destruction of Jerusalem and the temple
- Paul gives us more information about this sign of tribulation
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 "Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God."
 - This description fills out more what can be expected about this abomination that causes desolation in God's temple
- Revelation also speaks more to this future event in the tribulation
 - There will be worship of the Antichrist as the power of Satan works through the Antichrist (Revelation 13:3-4)
 - The Antichrist will speak open blasphemies against the God of heaven (Revelation 13:6)
 - The False Prophet will perform signs and wonders to encourage the worship of the Antichrist through the creation of an image of the Antichrist (Revelation 13:12-15)
- "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out, 16 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak."
 - Think of how terrible this was going to be that Jesus describes this type of retreat
 - "Flee to the mountains"
 - "Let the one who is on the housetop not go down, nor enter his house, to take anything out"

- “Why would anyone be on the rooftop of his house? It was the custom in Jewish Palestine of late antiquity to use the flat roof of one’s house for prayer or worship (Jer 19:13; Zeph 1:5; Acts 10:9), sleep (1 Sam 9:25), storing or drying fruit (Josh 2:6), proclaiming news (Isa 15:3; 22:1; Matt 10:27), or celebrating festivals (Neh 8:16). Outside stairs or ladders made it possible for one to descend from the roof without entering the house itself.”²
 - “And let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak”
 - “The danger will be so great that people should flee without stopping to gather up possessions. Again, this detail does not square well with the events of the 60s and 70s. Jesus’ point is that one must flee immediately and in great haste. The Jewish war had been waged for three years before Jerusalem was besieged. The approach of the Roman army was slow, the opportunity to escape prolonged. No, Jesus’ warning means that when the “abomination of desolation” is set up where he must not stand, ‘the End’ is now at hand (Gnilka, 2:195); the danger is great; the city must be abandoned without a moment’s delay.”³
- “17 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 18 Pray that it may not happen in winter.”
 - Jesus recognizes what pain and difficulty it will be for those who are pregnant and nursing infants as they try to flee

B. The severity of the tribulation (13:19-20)

19 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. 20 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.

- “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.”
 - This is a huge statement by Jesus
 - This sign of the abomination causing desolation marks the time of Great Tribulation
 - Scripture speaks of this time as “Jacob’s trouble”
 - Jeremiah 30:7 “Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it.”
 - This severe tribulation is also mentioned in Daniel’s prophecy
 - Daniel 12:1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never

² Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 321.

³ Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 321.

has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.”

- “The tribulation will be so great that it will eclipse all crises of biblical history, which is quite a claim when we remember the flood, the Babylonian captivity, and the war with Antiochus.”⁴
- This makes sense when one considers the mind-blowing events described in the book of Revelation, specifically chapters 6-18
- “And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved.”
 - The Lord actually keeps this time of tribulation or trouble short
 - If it continued any longer there would be threat no more human existence upon the earth
 - Reading the tribulation described in Revelation brings convincing weight behind Jesus’ Words
 - Again, this is clearly not referring to 70 AD
 - “To be sure, this war threatened all Jewish lives in Jerusalem (though, as it turned out, many thousands survived), but the fate of the whole of humanity did not hang in the balance.”⁵
- “But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.”
 - Why did God cut short the days of the tribulation?
 - To demonstrate His grace and mercy even in the midst of righteous judgment
 - God cuts short the suffering that His chosen ones (elect) have to suffer during the great tribulation
 - Who are these elect or chosen ones?
 - 144,000 sealed Jewish remnant
 - Anyone else who comes to faith in Jesus Christ during the tribulation

C. The seduction in the tribulation (13:21-23)

21 And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23 But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.

- “And then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.”
 - Jesus warns again about the rise of deceptive and powerful leaders who make false claims

⁴ Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 322.

⁵ Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 322.

- Jesus previously warned about this concerning the beginning of the birth pains that will come upon this earth
- Now, He warns that the tribulation will be the perfect time for these “false christs” and “false prophets” to arise and lead many astray
 - This is exactly the work of the Antichrist and the False Prophet in Revelation 13
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 “The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.”
- Notice the phrase “if possible” stating that the elect are still the elect
 - They have been chosen by God and God will keep them to the end
 - The seduction of the Antichrist and False Prophet are so strong and miraculous that if it was possible, even the elect would be led astray
 - God alone keeps His elect for Himself
- “23 But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand.”
 - Jesus calls for practical action in light of this information
 - This information is not merely to waste away in one’s head
 - This information about the great tribulation must cause His followers to “be on guard”
 - The one who has information must be ready and not led astray
 - This is also another sign of God’s grace, that He would inform His followers beforehand what is going to take place
 - Isaiah 46:8-10 “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, 9 remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’”

II. The coming of the Son of Man (13:24-27)

A. The aftermath (13:24-25)

24 *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”*

- “But in those days, after that tribulation,”
 - After the clear description of terrible events that will unfold in the tribulation, there is a summary of the scene before Christ returns
- “The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”
 - Revelation 6:12-13 “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, 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale.”

- Revelation 8:12 “The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light might be darkened, and a third of the day might be kept from shining, and likewise a third of the night.”
- Haggai 2:21-22 “Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, ‘I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, 22 and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms. I am about to destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations, and overthrow the chariots and their riders. And the horses and their riders shall go down, every one by the sword of his brother.’”
- Revelation 16:17-21 “The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” 18 And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. 19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. 21 And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.”
- Each of these events in the tribulation pave the way and set the scene for Christ’s return
 - “Gundry (782) remarks that the darkening of the sun and the failure of the moon to provide light constitute an undoing of the fourth day of creation (Gen 1:14–19). He may well be correct, for in v 19 the tribulation was described as ‘a tribulation as has never happened from the beginning of creation.’”⁶

B. The appearing (13:26)

26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.

- “They will see the Son of Man coming”
 - This will be a visible return of Jesus Christ to the earth
 - This is not a symbolic or spiritual appearing of the Son of Man
 - Revelation 1:7 “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.”
- “... in clouds with great power and glory”
 - In the same way Jesus leaves the earth, He will return

⁶ Craig A. Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, vol. 34B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2001), 328.

- Daniel 7:13 “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.”
- Acts 1:11 “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”
- The best picture of this glorious appearing is found in Revelation 19:11-20
 - Christ returning on a white horse
 - Slaying all those in rebellion against Him, including the Antichrist and the False Prophet who are thrown into the Lake of Fire

C. The assembly (13:27)

27 And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

- This process of gathering His elect from all over the earth is probably a reference to gathering the sealed 144,000 Jewish believers who believed in Jesus as the Messiah and were protected throughout the tribulation
 - “Some would view them as the church emerging from the great tribulation, but more probable is the view that they are the distinctly Jewish believers of that period, those who have been won to faith in Christ as Messiah during the great Tribulation.”⁷
- “From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven”
 - “The unusual expression is quite literally ‘from earth’s extremity to heaven’s extremity.’ It is apparently a reference to the fact that the visible extremes of earth and sky meet at the horizon; it thus seems to denote space in all directions. It strongly asserts that there will be no spot on the face of the globe where any of the elect will be overlooked.”⁸
- This assembly will be for the elect to be brought near to Christ their King and the establishment of His earthly Kingdom as described in Revelation 20:1-6

⁷ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 382.

⁸ D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Gospel of Mark: An Expository Commentary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1994), 382.