


The Gospel of Mark
Part 43
The Abomination of Desolation

TALKING WALKING POINTS

Leaders' Guide

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Suggested Starter Question

- 1 What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you?
...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation—*What do I see?*

- 2 Read 2 Peter 3:1-4. What general attitude do non-believers have about God's promised future judgment?
- 3 Read 2 Peter 3:4-7. What boast do they make in v. 4? **Why** do they question God's promise?
- 4 Circle the words "promise" in v. 4 and "by his word" in v. 5 & 7. **What** "escapes their notice" (v. 5)?
- 5 Did God destroy the world through Noah's flood (v. 6)? What did God promise in Genesis 9:11? According to 2 Peter 3:7, **how** did God promise to destroy the world the next time?
- 6 How do v. 8-9 explain God's apparent delay? What purpose is accomplished by God's delay?
- 7 What does God promise in v. 10?

Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- 8 How should we interpret God's delay in bringing judgment (see v. 8-9 & 15).
- 9 Noah's flood occurred about 4,500 **years** ago. According to v. 8, that's like how many **days** to God? If God promised something—and then delayed a week in fulfilling it—would we call him tardy?

Application—*What do I do with this?*

- 10 Read 2 Peter 3:14-15a. What does Peter say we should do with this perspective we've gained?
- 11 Read 2 Peter 3:15b-17. How should we respond in light of the fact that ignorant people twist Paul's words?
- 12 Read 2 Peter 3:18. Are you growing in the grace of Jesus? Specifically, what does that look like? Are you growing in the knowledge of Jesus? Specifically, what does that look like?

- 1 Standard “starter question”. You know the drill.
- 2 Mocking and disbelief.
- 3 Skepticism—“God warned about coming judgment, but it hasn’t happened. It probably never will.”
- 4 It escapes their notice that they’re questioning the veracity of God’s word, yet it was by God’s word that everything exists (“And God **said**, ‘Let there be...and it was.’”)
- 5 Yes, he destroyed the world through a flood. He promised that he’d never flood the earth again. The next time he’ll do it with fire!
- 6 God doesn’t operate by our time frame; he’s eternal, we’re a mere vapor. God’s patient time-table gives us opportunity to repent and be saved.
- 7 The Day of the Lord’s Judgment **will** come. It’ll come **without** warning. At that point, if you’re not ready, it’ll be too late.
- 8 View God’s patience as a gift—the gift of more time to repent (before it’s too late).
- 9 Just 4½ days! God hardly is bluffing just because he delays 4½ days!
- 10 Be diligent to be found by him in peace, spotless and blameless. Make good use of God’s patience—take this opportunity to be saved!
- 11 Realize that some parts of Scripture are hard to understand, and those who are untaught and unstable distort those passages (as they do also the rest of the Scriptures), and that will destroy them. Believers, on the other hand, must be attentive lest we all these unprincipled men to carry us away and we fall from our steadfastness.
- 12 You may have to “prime the pump”, so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)

Sermon Summary Mark 13:14-23

Jesus' disciples wrongly assumed that (1) the destruction of the temple, (2) Jesus' coming as a conquering King, and (3) the end to the present age will all take place at the same time, so they asked him to give them signs to look out for so they would know when "these things" would take place. In Mark 13:5-13 Jesus gave signs that they should not interpret as indicators that these future events are about to take place, and then in v. 14-23 he told them signs which do indicate the end is near: "the abomination that causes desolation". It comes from Daniel 9:25-27; 11:31-32 and 12:11. The Abomination of Desolation pointed to a future individual whose idolatrous actions would defile the Jewish temple and the worship that takes place there.

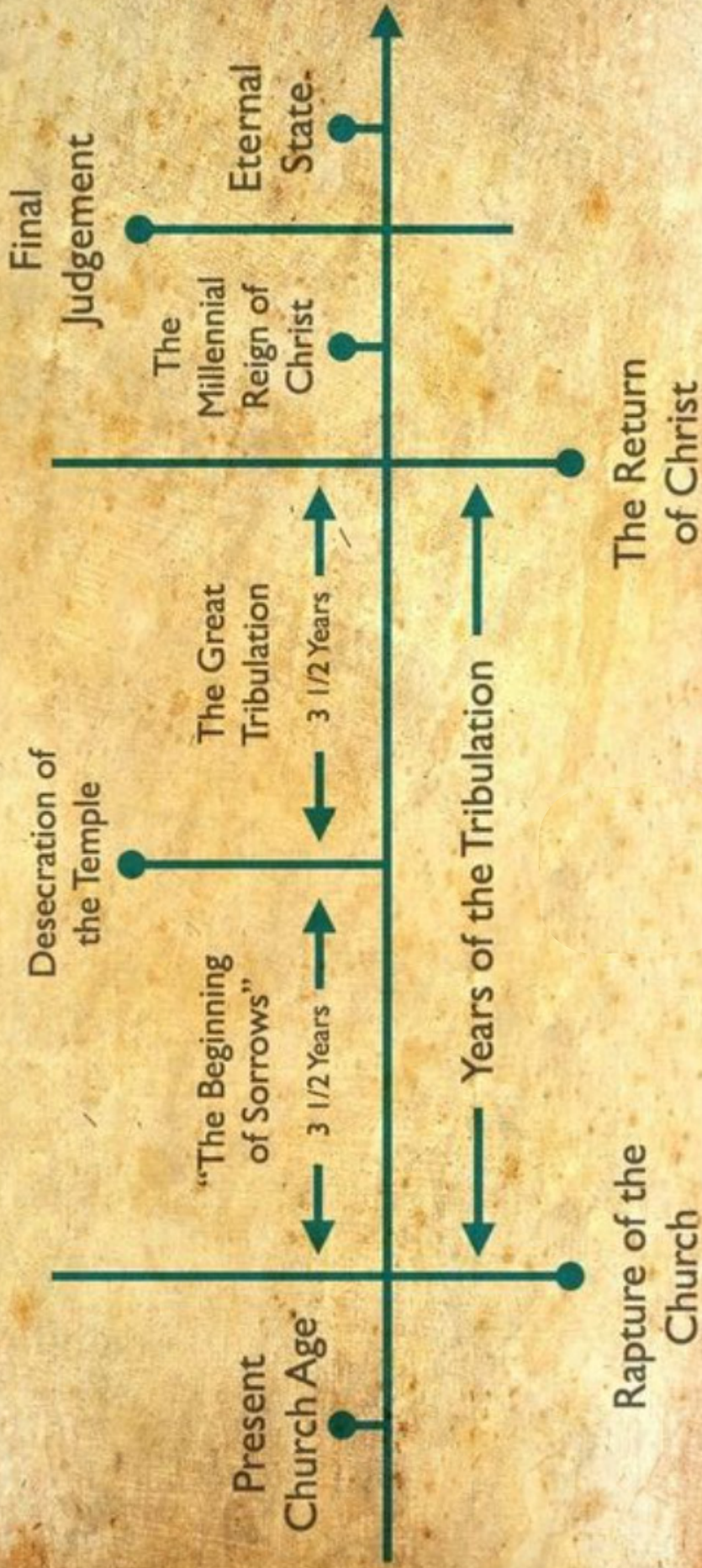
This prophecy was given around 700 BC. A first fulfillment occurred in 167 B.C. when the temple in Jerusalem was desecrated by a Syrian ruler named Antiochus Epiphanes. He erected an altar to the Greek god Zeus in the Jewish Temple and sacrificed a pig on it. But Jesus, speaking in AD 33, predicts a future fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus' description (v. 14) suggests that it points to a future person who will unlawfully enter the holy place of the temple, thus defiling it. Pulling together many threads of prophetic Scripture suggests that his identity is none other than the end-time Antichrist (Daniel 7:23-26; 9:25-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 8-9 and Revelation 13:1-10, 14-15). The sign God's people should look for is the appearance of this future ruler (the Antichrist) standing in the Temple in Jerusalem where he ought not be.

We would get bogged down digging into the details; instead, today I'll give you a bird's eye view of God's prophetic plan. The Abomination of Desolation, the Antichrist, will make a covenant with Israel at the beginning of the seven-year period preceding Christ's second coming (Daniel 9:27). In the middle of that seven year period, the Antichrist will break his covenant and will put an end to all sacrifices. He will then proceed to enter the temple and proclaim himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; Revelation 11:2), launching the Great Tribulation (Revelation chapters 6, 8-9 and 16). Those who refuse to be identified with the Antichrist will be persecuted and forced to flee for refuge (Revelation 12:6, 13-17). I don't think the church will be on earth while all of this is going on; I believe in a pretribulational rapture.

Many Jews and Gentiles will come to believe in Messiah Jesus during this period (Revelation 7), and many of these will be martyred for their faith (Revelation 6:9-11). If I were a Jew living in Israel, and I saw some foreign powerful, charismatic political leader sign a seven year peace treaty with Israel, I'd start packing my bags (Daniel 9:27; 11:31 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4,). Time to evacuate! He is going to break his treaty with Israel, enter the Temple and demand to be worshipped as God. He may even claim to be Jesus! This revealing of the identity of the Antichrist signals the coming of the judgment of God on the earth. The Old Testament prophets referred to "The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord"—a time of intense judgment followed by Jesus' second coming. More about that next week...

Satanic deception will continue until the very end (v. 20-22). False Christs and false prophets will seek to lead people astray in the end times, just as they do now. Some will perform miracles that are so convincing and so deceptive, that even God's people will be tempted to believe their lies (Matthew 7:21-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 13:13-14). We have to have our "deception antennas" up all the time. A miracle is not a sign that God is behind it. Satan can do false wonders, so don't be deceived! You will know when Jesus returns. It will be crystal clear. Be bold and courageous, and when persecution comes your way, don't be surprised. And if you have not done so already, now is the time to get right with God, because when this stuff starts happening, there is not much time left.

Timeline of the End Times



Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Peter instructs us to "fix our hope **completely** on the grace to be brought to us" at Christ's return. What do each of the following passages teach us about that day?

Monday— Read Acts 2:17–21

Tuesday— Read 1 Corinthians 5:2–7

Wednesday— Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11.

Thursday— Read 2 Peter 3:9–13.

Friday— Read 1 Corinthians 1:3–9.

Saturday— Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1–2.



Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]