A BETTER WORD

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

It's the End of the World As We Know It

◆ *Mark 13:1–37*

THE BIG IDEA

Faithfulness in the present, not decoding signs or predicting dates, is the best preparation for the end.

SERMON SUMMARY

Leaving the temple, a disciple marveled at its massive stones; and Jesus predicted its total destruction. On the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked when this would happen. Jesus' answer moved between two events: the near destruction of the temple in AD 70, and the distant tribulation before his second coming, including wars, earthquakes, famines, and persecution. He warned, "see that no one leads you astray," because these would tempt people to think the end had arrived when they were only "the beginning of birth pains."

Jesus described a coming "abomination of desolation" as a sign of great tribulation, followed by his visible return to gather his elect. No one knows the day or hour, not even Jesus in his earthly ministry, only the Father. The point isn't a decoded timeline but a call to watchfulness.

DIGGING DEEPER

OBSERVATION

1. The disciples asked two questions in verse 4: "when will these things be" and "what will be the sign." Does Jesus give a direct answer to either, or something else instead?

INTERPRETATION

2. Jesus called wars, earthquakes, and famines only "the beginning of birth pains," not the end itself. Why might people be so quick to read ordinary disasters as definitive signs of the end?

3. Pastor Nick connected the "abomination of desolation" (v.14) to a historical desecration 200 years earlier. What pattern does this reveal, and what does it suggest about the final Antichrist figure?

THEOLOGICAL CONNECTION

4. Jesus says no one knows the day or hour of his return, "not even the angels … nor the Son, but only the Father" (v.32). What does Jesus command his followers to do instead of calculating the timeline (vv.33–37)?

5. This passage warns against two opposite errors: obsessing over signs, and assuming there's still plenty of time before surrendering to Christ. Which tempts you more, and why?

LIVING IT OUT

HEART CHECK

Jesus doesn't call his followers to crack a code or build a bunker. He calls them to stay awake, doing the work in front of them because the master could return any moment. Are there compromises you've been excusing as "not a big deal"?

ACTION STEPS

— Identify one specific way you've been living as if you have unlimited time to get serious with God.

— Make one concrete change that reflects living as someone who is truly awake and ready.

"SO WHAT?" CHALLENGE

> ***No one knows the hour, but everyone can be found faithful in this one. Stay awake; don't wait for urgency.***

REFLECTION & PRAYER

KEY VERSE — TO MEMORIZE

"Therefore stay awake … for you do not know when the master of the house will come … stay awake."

— Mark 13:35, 37

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask God to free you from the fear of predicting the end and the temptation to delay wholehearted devotion, and thank him that Jesus' words will never pass away.

YOUR PRAYER