

4 The city that rejects its king (Mark 12:28–13:37)

Jesus rode into Jerusalem acclaimed as the son of David arriving in the name of the Lord to save his people. But the temple would not accept his authority, setting up the confrontation that results in his crucifixion by the end of the week. Any questions on what we covered last week before we proceed?

Tonight we hear Jesus publicly warning the leaders not to reject their king (12:28-37), and then privately answering his disciples' question about whether Jerusalem would actually fall and how he will become king (Mark 13).

4.1 The way to God's kingdom (12:28-34)

Of the 613 commands in the Torah, which was the most important?

Mark 12:28-31 (NIV)

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this:

'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ **Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' [Deuteronomy 6:4–5]

³¹ "The second is this:

'**Love your neighbour** as yourself.' [Leviticus 19:18]

There is no commandment greater than these."

Jesus' answer was not controversial. He chose the passage from Deuteronomy 6 known as the *Shema*. (*Shema* is the opening Hebrew word, meaning "Listen.") The *Shema* still is regarded as the foundational creed of Judaism. Observant Jews repeat the *Shema* in prayer three times a day.

Jesus wasn't asked for the second command, but he gave it anyway. This theme was present in Judaism, but the Messiah brought it to prominence. His brother calls it *the royal law* (James 2:8). His close friend treated the second command as the litmus test for whether we're doing the first (1 John 4:19-21).

The guy who asked the question had given Jesus an easy one. He was pleased with how Jesus had put the Sadducees in their place as "*badly mistaken*" (verse 27).

Mark 12:32-33 (NIV)

³² "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Yes, the guy was having a dig at those who run the temple. They gave God burnt offerings every morning and night, as well as the sacrifices everyone brought for festivals like Passover. But God is looking for a responsive people rather than rituals:

Psalm 50:9-13 (NIV)

⁹ I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, ¹⁰ for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. ... ¹² If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. ¹³ Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?



If that was so even in Old Testament times, we cannot treat the cross of Christ as a blood sacrifice required by God. Hebrews 7–10 explains how the rituals of the previous covenant have reached fulfilment in Christ, but it's important not to import pagan views of sacrifice into our understanding of the cross.¹² God did not want the temple leaders in Jerusalem to sacrifice his son: that's called sin.

Mark 12:34 (NIV)

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

"Not far from the kingdom?" The guy needs to take the next step and recognize who is king. That's the entry point for the kingdom of God.

Hearing the challenge Jesus gave to this supporter, no one else is game to say anything in support or challenge of Jesus. So, he takes the initiative, putting the temple leaders on the spot.

4.2 God deals with Messiah's enemies (12:35-37)

Mark 12:35-37 (NIV)

³⁵ While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?"

³⁶ David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” ’ [Psalm 110:1]

³⁷ David himself calls him ‘Lord.’ How then can he be his son?” The large crowd listened to him with delight.

¹² N. T. Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion* (HarperCollins, 2018)

Have you noticed how often Jesus refers to the Psalms? Especially the Davidic psalms? The psalms of David describe how David and his sons constantly struggled against enemies who did not recognize them as the LORD'S anointed. And from the very first Davidic psalm, his enemies are from his own family (Psalm 3:title).

When we studied the Psalms, we saw how they're arranged into five books that tell Israel's story.¹³ David's psalms dominate the first two books (56 of 72 psalms). The kingdom falls in Book 3, so David is almost absent from Book 4 (just 2 psalms). But David returns in Book 5 with the promise of the kingdom of God restored in the Messiah (15 psalms). Psalms 108–110 are the earliest Davidic psalms in Book 5.

Psalm 110:title-2 (NIV)

Of David. A psalm.

¹ The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

² The LORD will extend your mighty sceptre from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of your enemies!"

Who are the people in this Psalm? *The LORD* (block letters) is the covenant name in Hebrew (*YHWH*). He addresses someone David calls, "*My lord!*" David was the fountainhead of the entire kingdom in Old Testament times, so who is this? God is enthroning someone greater than David.

The enemies are still here. David's lord is to reign while God brings his enemies under his authority. The Messiah receives the sceptre of his father David to rule from Zion even while his enemies remain on the scene.

If you ever wondered how Jesus knew he was not to fight like David did, here's your answer. This is why King Jesus has not been collecting an army to subdue the rebellion against his authority. He knows God will raise him up and give him the kingship even if they kill him.

But what will God do with his enemies if the temple has become *a den of robbers* bent on taking the Messiah's authority through violence? Is this the end of the temple leadership, the high priesthood descended from Aaron and the Levites? Would God remove the temple and the Levitical priesthood, turning their authority over to the king from the tribe of Judah instead?

Psalm 110:4 (NIV)

⁴ The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind:

"You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."



An Egyptian throne with footstool, from the time of King David. (Allen Browne, 2016).

¹³ <https://allenbrowne.blog/2024/07/22/the-story-of-the-psalms/>

Genesis 14:18 describes Melchizedek as both a *king* and a *priest of God Most High*. So here's the precedent for God to remove the priesthood from the Messiah's enemies and give it to the king who is not a descendant of Levi.

This is why Jesus keeps referring to the Psalms. The Messiah inherits and fulfils all the promises God gave to David.

4.3 Pretence versus practice (12:38-44)

That was really putting the temple leaders in their place, and the crowd enjoyed it:

Mark 12:38-40 (NIV)

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

Jesus' critique is that those in power over God's people are not serving for the love of God and the love of the people. They're missing the main message of the Torah and the Prophets (verses 28-34). They're serving their own interests.

For example, when a widow could not pay her debt, they saw an opportunity to acquire her assets cheaply. Instead of caring for the flock, they're *devouring* them. That was Ezekiel's explanation of why the kingdom fell in Old Testament times: “*This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them*” (Ezekiel 34:10).

The Messiah himself is among those whom the leaders would chew up and spit out to feed themselves (compare Matthew 23:27-38). The city that refuses to follow the king God sent them will fall again. He tells his people the city cannot be defended, so when you see foreigners taking Jerusalem run for the hills. Yet even in the face of this disaster, God still gives the kingship to the Son of Man. That's all coming in Mark 13.

Jesus reserved his strongest words of condemnation for the shepherds of Israel, the leaders who are meant to be caring for God's people but only care for themselves. But among the struggling people are some who do have a deep and genuine trust in God:

Mark 12:41-44 (NIV)

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

We're still talking about this amazing widow's faith because the king noticed her. What a contrast to how the religious leaders taking advantage of widows.



4.4 The temple will fall (13:1-4)

Now we come to a passage that some understand as referring to the end of the world, while others understand as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem. The NIV tries to have it both ways, with the heading: *The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times*.

So what is this chapter about? Was Jesus speaking of what would happen to Jerusalem within 40 years, the destruction of the city and temple by Roman armies in AD 70? Or was he speaking of events that are still future for us?

Mark 13:1-2 (NIV)

¹ As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!”

² “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

The disciples were not tourists who'd never seen the temple. They were responding as the sons of Korah had in Psalm 84: *“How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty!”* Every year for festivals like Passover they came to *the courts of the LORD* to meet *the living God* and to pray for the coming of *your anointed* (84:9).

But there's more than that in their words. Remember when Jesus first told them they were off to Jerusalem where *the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law* (8:31)? They wanted Jesus to avoid this conflict: *He spoke plainly about this, but Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him* (8:32).

Now they've arrived, the conflict between king and temple has escalated. He overturned this *den of robbers*, a *withered fig tree*, a *mountain to be cast down* (11:15-23). He said God would *remove the tenants* from his vineyard because they rejected his Son (12:7-8). Maybe the disciples are still asking Jesus to back off, to avoid conflict with the temple.

Jesus won't back off. He's adamant. The house meant to bear God's name has become a den of robbers who will kill to take the Son's inheritance for themselves. Brick by brick, the massive stones and magnificent buildings will be reduced to rubble.

Mark 13:3-4 (NIV)

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately,
⁴ “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”



The temple mount from the Mount of Olives. (Photo: Allen Browne, 2017)

The disciples cannot imagine the temple mount without the temple. Their question is, “When?”

Jesus' response is the longest monologue in Mark's Gospel. The king speaks of:

- a) the difficulties God's people face (verses 5-13)
- b) Judea's distress at Jerusalem's fall (verses 14-19)
- c) God shaking down the powers that run the world (verses 20-27)
- d) the Son of Man receiving the kingdom without human forces (verses 28-31)
- e) the importance of his servants being about the king's business (verses 32-37).

Let's take these one at a time.

4.5 The difficulties God's people face (13:5-13)

Jesus is very aware that he is not delivering the kind of kingship people want. They expected a son of David to fight their enemies and liberate Jerusalem. Instead, Jesus is speaking of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. Disillusioned people will ask the question John asked as he faced death in Herod's prison: “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” (Matthew 11:2).

Mark 13:5-6 (NIV)

⁵ Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁶ Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.”

Within 100 years of Jesus' time, a number of people claimed to be God's anointed leader to free his people from foreign rule. All these rebellions were unsuccessful, usually ending in the death of the so-called messiah and some of his supporters.¹⁴

At the heart of these messiah movements was the belief that Israel was meant to be a kingdom under God. God freed Jacob's family from Pharaoh, and freed his people through the judges and kings. God wanted to free his people from the powers that conquered them such as Babylon, Persia, Greece, the Seleucids, and Rome. Their

¹⁴ N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, (SPCK, 1992), 170–181.

occupation by foreigners was the result of centuries filled with wars and rumours of wars. Jesus warned:

Mark 13:7-8 (NIV)

⁷ “When you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁸ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.”

Did you notice what Jesus said? I've heard evangelists use this text to achieve the exact opposite. They list all the wars, earthquakes, and famines of our time as proof that the end is near, whereas Jesus said not to regard these tragedies as signs of the end: “*The end is still to come.*” These preachers want people to be alarmed so they will make decisions, whereas Jesus said, “*Do not be alarmed*” (verse 7). If people are alarmed, we need to reassure them that God's plans to redeem the world are still on track, that the current painful events are nothing more than the labour pains of what God will ultimately bring to birth.

God has given the world into the management of his Messiah, even though it may not feel that way when other rulers are making you suffer:

Mark 13:9-10 (NIV)

⁹ “You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.

¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.”

Jesus' disciples certainly understood what it was like to be called before local councils to give an account of what they meant by declaring Jesus as king. They were flogged by Synagogue leaders who wanted to suppress the message that Jesus is the Messiah. They were called before governors and kings to present evidence of Jesus' kingship. You'll find all of that in the Book of Acts, throughout church history, and in the present day. The Messiah is reigning *in the midst of his enemies* (12:36; Psalm 110).

So why does God leave his enemies in place? Why hasn't he made them part of the Messiah's footstool already? What's he waiting for? God's clock is not set by wars, earthquakes, famines or disasters. There is one reason for God's patience:

“First, it is necessary to announce the good news to all the nations.”

The **gospel** is *the good news about Jesus the Messiah* (Mark 1:1), the announcement of the restoration of God's reign (1:2-3 quoting Isaiah 40), the coming of the great ruler (John's message in 1:7), the voice from heaven announcing the arrival of the Spirit-empowered Son (1:10-11), the good news that the time had come for God's reign to come near as Jesus himself described the gospel (1:15). It's *the gospel of the kingdom* as Matthew 24:14 reports Jesus' words here.

The gospel is God's proclamation that he has rescued the world from serving the powers of sin and death, transferring it into the reign of his anointed ruler. That's the message we bear to the rulers of the nations. King Jesus appointed Paul "*to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings*" (Acts 9:15), so Paul *appeals to Caesar* (25:11) so he could *stand trial before Caesar* (27:24) where *he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about Ruler Jesus the Messiah—with all boldness and without hindrance* (28:31). That's the trajectory of the Book of Acts (compare 1:8).

Mark 13:11 (NIV)

"Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit."

It's hard to defend Jesus' kingship in a court that relies on human law. As Jesus explained in John 16:7-11, the Holy Spirit is his legal advocate in the world that does not judge right and wrong correctly (John 16:7-11). Holy Spirit's testimony affirms Jesus authority, empowering us to do the same (John 15:26-27).

The trouble is that the issue of Jesus' kingship divides the world:

Mark 13:12-13 (NIV)

¹² "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child.

Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.

¹³ Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved."

When a court case divides a family, is it worth pursuing? The matter of whether Jesus is the Saviour of the world is worth holding on to at all costs (Matthew 10:32-36).

4.6 Judea's distress at Jerusalem's fall (13:14-19)

Having framed the Messiah's kingship in this way, Jesus turns to what it will be like for his people when Rome rips apart what was meant to be God's Holy City:

Mark 13:14-16 (NIV)

¹⁴ "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵ Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. ¹⁶ Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak."

What does '*the abomination that causes desolation*' refer to? Between the destruction of Solomon's temple by Babylon in 586 BC and the destruction of the second temple by Rome in AD 70, there was a moment when the temple ceased to function. A gentile ruler named Antiochus Epiphanies IV overpowered Jerusalem, entered the temple, erected an idol to Zeus, and sacrificed a pig on the altar. For three years, the temple was defunct.

Daniel described this temporary cessation as '*the abomination that causes desolation*' (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). That's the reference the reader is meant to understand. Jesus' audience would see Rome invading the temple, defiling the Holy Place, bringing the sacrifices to an end. It would cease to function.

These words are specifically addressed to *those who live in Judea* (verse 14). He tells them not to fight but to *flee to the mountains*. Just as Jeremiah told his generation they would be slaughtered if they tried to defend the city when Babylon attacked, Jesus told them to escape *when you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies* (Luke 21:20). Forget your possessions. Run for your life. Don't go back to get anything, not even the coat you need to survive the cold nights (verses 15-16).

What I find astounding is the empathy the king feels for his people:

Mark 13:17-19 (NIV)

¹⁷ “How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ¹⁸ Pray that this will not take place in winter, ¹⁹ because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equalled again.”

Imagine a very pregnant woman trying to run to escape the soldiers. Imagine a young mother hiding in a cave with the other refugees telling her, “Get rid of that crying baby, or we all die.” These are the horrors of war (verse 17).

If it's winter, the vulnerable may not survive (verse 18). Matthew 24:20 says Jesus also told them to pray their flight would not take place *on the Sabbath*. Jews would travel only a limited distance of the Sabbath, so they might not be able to escape. All of this makes perfect sense if we're talking about the first generation of Jewish Christians who still lived by the customs they'd inherited, but it makes no sense if you want to interpret Jesus' words for a later time in history.

Jesus takes responsibility for the unbearable distress of his people (verse 19). If he'd followed the way of Joshua and the judges, and the kings who fought to free their nation, it would not be like this. But Jesus believed he was to save his people with a cross, not a sword. In taking the way of the cross, Jesus was giving them a cross also. It is through self-sacrifice that he would receive the kingdom (Mark 8:34–9:1).

Jesus describes this as the worst time for his people. When humans claimed the knowledge of good and evil for themselves in the beginning, it had a devastating effect on creation, so God called Abraham to create the nation that would restore the blessing of his reign to the world. When that nation fell to Babylon, God promised the restoration of his reign in the Messiah. When they rejected the Messiah God sent to save them, it was the worst of times for God's people (verse 19).

4.7 Overturning the powers (13:20-31)

Again, Jesus is so conscious that his people may seek other messiahs because he has not met their expectations and his people have suffered as a result:

Mark 13:20-25 (NIV)

²⁰ “If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.

²¹ At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘Look, there he is!’ do not believe it. ²² For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²³ So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

²⁴ “But in those days, following that distress,

“ ‘the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light; [Isaiah 13:10]

²⁵ the stars will fall from the sky,

and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” [Isaiah 34:4]

Please don't impose our modern cosmology on the imagery Jesus was using. This is not about blood moons, eclipses, or literal stars falling from the sky. The ancients viewed the stars as the gods that reigned in the heavens. Earthly rulers claimed to be in power because of the starry hosts, so if the starry hosts fall it means the earthly rulers fall with the gods they trusted.

That's how Isaiah was using these terms. Specifically, Isaiah 13 is *an oracle regarding Babylon* (Isaiah 13:1). It progresses into *a taunt against the king of Babylon* (14:4). Nebuchadnezzar claimed to be the brightest of all stars (*the morning star*), but Isaiah describes God bringing him down to earth: *How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations* (Isaiah 14:12).

In the same way, Isaiah 34 is God addressing the leaders of the nations who claim the starry hosts gave them power. So when they fall the starry hosts fall, they fall.

Unlike the nations, Jesus does receive the kingship directly from God, without the backing of earthly armies:

Mark 13:26-27 (NIV)

²⁶ “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.”

Jesus chose phrases from Daniel 7. After trying to get the rulers to acknowledge that power is given by God (Daniel 1–6), Daniel sees the rulers of this world as warring beasts bent on taking God's kingdom too (Daniel 7:1-8). It would take an act of God

to remove authority from the beasts and give it to someone more human-like, someone who inherits the authority God gave us when he made us in his image:

Daniel 7:13-14 (NIV)

¹³ In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like **a son of man**, coming **with the clouds of heaven**.

He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

¹⁴ He was given authority, **glory and sovereign power**; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

That's what Jesus is relying on as he faces the beasts who will tear him apart in Jerusalem. Without relying on a human army, he will come to power as the Ancient of Days raises him up. Supported by the heavenly hosts, he will gather his scattered flock from the ends of the earth where they've been scattered while they had no shepherd (compare Mark 6:34).

When God raised up the one whom the rulers killed, Jesus received *all authority in heaven and on earth* (Matthew 28:18). The disciples saw the Father give him the kingdom that arrived without human force in their own lifetime, just as Jesus had said (Mark 8:34–9:1). He now repeats that promise:

Mark 13:28-31 (NIV)

²⁸ “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

God's kingship is enduring, more enduring than the realms themselves. That's what Jesus says about the enduring authority God has given him over both realms.

Finally, Jesus responds to the “*When?*” question they asked back in verse 4:

Mark 13:32 (NIV)

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

The “*When?*” question is not a useful one. Pharisees asked *when the kingdom of God would come*, and Jesus told them it wasn't something they could observe. Instead he told them how the kingdom comes: “*The kingdom of God is in your midst*” for the king was already in their midst (Luke 17:21).

After his resurrection, the disciples asked him, “Is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” Again, he said that the wrong question: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.” Instead, Jesus told them

how the kingdom comes, not in an instant but progressively: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:4-8).

For those of us who recognize the king, the kingdom is already here and functioning. It's not fully here yet, for there are still people who don't yet recognize the king.

That's why it's so important for his servants to be about the king's business now, as we wait for the fullness of God's reign to restore the whole creation:

Mark 13:33-37 (NIV)

³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.

³⁴ It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵ “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’ ”

4.8 Conclusion

We've understood Mark 13 as Jesus' explanation of how the world becomes the kingdom of God. The city that rejected its king falls. The rulers who do not serve God fall. The murdered son of man is raised up with heaven's support, inheriting the authority God gave humans, leading the world into the glorious reign of his Father.

There are other ways to understand this chapter. Some treat the word *distress* in verses 19 and 24 as a technical term for a future period of 3–7 years: the *Tribulation*. They debate whether the *Rapture* is pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation. *Rapture* is another technical term for God snatching the godly out of the world, who later return with Jesus' second coming. *Rapture* is not a word found in the Bible, and the view is a montage assembled from various places since no single passages teaches this sequence of events.

Some interpret *the fig tree* (verse 28) as the nation of Israel restored by the League of Nations in 1947. A popular book by Hal Lindsay predicted Jesus would return within 40 years of 1947 (a *generation*), but 80 years later he was clearly wrong. Jesus told the generation listening to his words in AD 30 that they would see everything he'd spoken about in their lifetime.

Eschatology (the study of things will end) can be divisive. What are your thoughts?

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In preparation for next week, read **Mark 14**.