

Objective: All in your household will be prepared to stand for Christ in difficult times, waiting confidently for His return.

How This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible: Mark wrote his account of the life of Christ in the mid- to late- AD 50s based on the eyewitness testimony of Peter. The events of this chapter took place in AD 33.

Bible Basics: Review Psalm 51:10 this week with family members.

Read the Word: Mark 13:1-27

Disciple Your Kids: Discuss the signs we will see that will lead up to the time of Christ's return. Help children understand that we may face difficult times, but that God will be with us.



Key Truth: Christ's Return Will Follow a Time of False Teaching, Wars, Natural Disasters, and Persecution of Believers (Mark 13:1-13)

- When asked about the impressive Temple buildings in Jerusalem, Jesus surprisingly foretold the total destruction of the Temple. This was fulfilled 40 years later when the Romans ransacked Jerusalem and demolished the Temple. The disciples asked when this would happen and what signs would lead up to it (verses 1-4).
- Jesus warned His followers to be ready for false teachers and false messiahs. They were not to be alarmed by news of wars and natural disasters. These were only the beginning, like the beginning of birth pains. They would increase. Ridicule and persecution of Christ-followers would increase. The end will not come, however, until the gospel is proclaimed to all nations. When they were brought to trial, the Holy Spirit would give His followers the words to say. They would be hated, but those who endure to the end will be saved (verses 5-13).



Key Truth: Christ's Return Will Follow a Time of Terrible Tribulation (Mark 13:14-27)

- Many scholars believe the events of this section refer to both "near" events (the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70) and a great time of tribulation to take place in the last days. The near events would foreshadow the end time events. According to verse 14, the sign that this was about to happen would be a terrible, idolatrous desecration of the Temple referred to as *the abomination of desolation* (verse 14).
- When this abomination comes, believers should flee, not even taking time to retrieve belongings. This would be a time of distress like none before. The best news in this scenario is that God will cut short the days and set limits on the Tribulation period. And this He will do for the elect, the people of God. Believers should not be fooled by false christs and false prophets who will try to lead them astray (verses 15-23).
- After that time of great tribulation, there will be great disorder in the heavens. The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers or planets in the heavens will be shaken. These catastrophic events will soon be followed by the return of Christ. This is Jesus' personal, visible, bodily return to earth in His glorified state. When He comes this time, all will see Him coming with the clouds and with great glory. The angels will gather God's people from all over the world (verses 24-27).

Discussion Starters

Use one or more of the following questions as discussion starters with family members this week. Questions in **bold** will be good to use with elementary age children.

- **What are some events that will lead up to Christ's return?**
- How can believers recognize and resist false teaching?
- Why should believers expect to be persecuted?
- What does persecution look like for Christians around the world?
- How can we prepare ourselves to stand for Christ when difficult times come?
- What are we to do until Jesus returns?

Everyday Extras

Have a keep-your-room challenge. Tell everyone in the family that there will be a prize (a special treat, cash, or an adventure) if their room is clean when a surprise guest arrives sometime this week. Be very specific about the chores that must be done to qualify for the prize. However, no one will know when the guest will come—including Mom and Dad! Now this is the part where you really need a good friend. Ask a friend or neighbor to surprise you this week—any time, without prior notice! That surprise guest is invited to come in and inspect whenever he or she chooses to determine if your family wins the prize!

Just like your family had to be ready for the special guest, we have to be ready for Jesus to come back. He has given us an assignment, and He wants us to be prepared and ready for His return. If we are doing what is right, we will watch for Him joyfully!

Preschool Highlights for SQUARE 1 & ROUND 2

Today your child learned the people first praised Jesus when He entered Jerusalem. By several days later, the people wanted to hurt Him. One of Jesus' disciples told the leaders where Jesus was, and the men arrested Jesus. They took Jesus to a man who was like a judge who then sent Him to another judge. Jesus loved the people in His time, and I know **Jesus Loves Me** too.