

JESUS IS COMING

Mark 13:26-37

Key Verses: 13:26-27

“At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 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.”

Last week, Jesus taught us about the signs of the end of the age. He told us that things will get really bad as the end of the world approaches. There will be all kinds of natural and man-made calamities such as earthquakes and wars. The unbelieving world will hate Christians and persecute us. Many false Christs and false prophets will try to deceive us by performing impressive miracles. What must be our attitude when terrible things happen all around us? Jesus told us that such things must happen before the end comes. He also told us that these things are like birth pains. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Our pains and sufferings for Jesus’ name will not be in vain. Those who stand firm to the end will be saved. Jesus told us these things ahead of time so that we may be prepared.

In today’s passage, Jesus gives us a wonderful promise—that he will come again. He will come in clouds with great power and glory to gather his faithful followers and take us to the eternal kingdom of God. This is our ultimate hope. May God help us to have this hope in our hearts!

I. “WITH GREAT POWER AND GLORY” (26-27)

Look at verse 26. *“At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.”* Who is the Son of Man? It is Jesus our Lord who came to this world the first time to give his life as a ransom sacrifice for sinners like us (Mk 10:45). Jesus promises here that he will come again with great power and glory. This verse teaches us that human history as we know it will end with the second coming of our Lord Jesus. This climactic event will be heralded by darkening of the sun and falling of stars (24-25). Some time ago, giant asteroids called Shoemaker-Levy 9 punched big holes on Jupiter. People enjoyed watching the event on TV. But, in the last days, when heavenly bodies shake and stars fall like autumn leaves, people will faint from terror (Lk 21:26). The sun and moon will be darkened and the stars will fall from the sky. This would signal the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 26 again. *“At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.”* The second coming of Jesus will be quite different from his first coming. Jesus first came to this world as a helpless baby in a manger. No one knew about his coming, except for a few shepherds and wise men. It was not



reported by the media, not even local TV channels. He became a suffering servant. He suffered endlessly to serve sinners. Once he was hungry, tired and thirsty after traveling under the hot sun, but he had a 1:1 Bible study with a sinful Samaritan woman. He patiently led her to the living water welling up to eternal life. Another time, Jesus healed a man with a shriveled hand, fully knowing that he would be persecuted by the Jewish leaders for healing the man on Sabbath. Finally, he was crucified on the cross to take away the sins of the world. But his second coming will be different. This time he will come in clouds with great power and glory. Every eye shall see him coming (Rev 1:7). His coming this time will not be a local event. It will affect everyone—both the living and the dead. He will come as the Judge of the living and the dead. His second coming will be the time of judgment for all God-haters. These people often laugh at the believers of Christ. They jeer at Christians, saying, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised?” (2Pe 3:4) But when they see Jesus coming in clouds with great power and glory, they will no longer laugh. It will be a dreadful day for them.

On the other hand, Jesus’ second coming will be a great day for all believers. Look at verse 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 will gather his elect—those whom he has chosen (20)—from the four corners of the universe. Our Lord will gather all the faithful men and women of God who shed many tears for the sake of his name. He will wipe all the tears from our faces. He will heal our wounds that we received for his name. He will adorn us with the crown of life. He will take us to the kingdom of God so that we may be with him forever. This is our true hope.

II. LEARN FROM THE FIG TREE (28-31)

Look at verses 28-29. *“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. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.”* What lesson does the fig tree teach us about the second coming of Jesus? At least three things. We know for certain that the summer season is near when trees become full of leaves. We know that summer always follows spring. Jesus says that his second coming will happen just as surely as summer comes after spring. The fig tree also waits patiently until it is its season. It does not bloom in the middle of winter just because it cannot wait for summer to come. Rather, it prepares itself patiently until its time comes. Likewise, the second coming of Jesus will surely happen soon, but it will not happen sooner than God’s time. There is one more thing we can learn from the fig tree. Jesus wants us to observe the signs of the end of the age and see them with spiritual eyes. We must study the word of God carefully so that we may not be misled by the clever and persuasive words and actions of the false messiahs. We must see all the natural and man-made calamities in light of Jesus’ words so that we may not be alarmed but know that these things must happen before the end comes.

We live in an uncertain world (and we don’t have to be NFL players to say this). We don’t know what will happen tomorrow, let alone next year. But there is one thing that we can be absolutely sure. It is the promise of Jesus’ return. Look at verses 30-31. *“I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”* How

can we be so sure that all the words of Jesus will happen in the future? We know that because God has never reneged on his promises. God kept all his promises throughout history. In fact, the work of God is the work of his promises. He gave his promises to his servants. He promised that he would bless Abraham, and he blessed him to be a source of blessing when Abraham obeyed his words. He promised Moses that he would deliver his people from their slavery in Egypt and he kept his promise despite the efforts of Pharaoh to derail his plan. Most of all, he kept his promise to send the Messiah to deliver his people from their sin and death. Now Jesus was about to fulfill this promise by dying on the cross as the Lamb of God. Again this is what Jesus promises concerning his second coming: *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”* What more assurance do we need?

III. “BE ON GUARD! BE ALERT! KEEP WATCH!” (32-37)

Up until now in this chapter, Jesus spent most of his time explaining what the signs of the end of the age will be and how we should have spiritual eyes to view these events. But the disciples were also interested in the timing of these events. They had asked, “Tell us, when will these things happen?” (4) Many people today are more interested in the timing of Jesus’ second coming than the signs of the end times. What was Jesus’ answer to the question of timing? He had a rather simple answer. Look at verse 32. *“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”* His answer is that no one knows the exact timing but the Father God.

The second coming of Jesus will happen as surely as the seasons change. So why does God keep the timing of his coming a secret? It is because he wants us to get ready for the glorious event by living a life of faith rather than speculating on the timing. Look at verses 33-34. *“Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.”* We learn here that Jesus wants us to be on guard and spiritually alert, like servants who are alert with their assigned task when they don’t know when their master is coming home.

God knows that most of us are like a teenager who is left home alone for weekend. If he knows exactly when his parents will return, he is tempted to hold a wild party in his house by inviting all kinds of friends. He figures that he can clean up the house just in time for his parents’ return as if nothing went on in the house. But if he does not know when his parents will come home, he would be more alert so that he doesn’t get in trouble.

Christian church history has had many misguided incidences that resemble such teenage behavior. A leader named William Miller claimed that Christ would return in 1843. When he predicted that April 3 would be the day of Jesus’ coming, some of his disciples went to mountains to welcome Jesus before anyone else. Others went to cemeteries hoping to go to heaven together with their dead relatives. Some well-to-do ladies in Philadelphia gathered together outside the town to avoid entering heaven with common folks. But Jesus did not return on April 3, and they were disillusioned. Their leader revised the date several more times and each time they were disappointed. This is just one of many false predictions on Jesus’ second coming. It amazes me to know how

people do not pay attention to the word of God that couldn't be clearer. Jesus said in no uncertain terms: *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."*

The apocalyptic literature is littered with many technical aspects of the end times and the second coming of Jesus. In their preoccupation with the technical details of the end times and the rapture, many writers tend to obscure the two most obvious messages of the apocalyptic scriptures in the Bible, that is, (1) Jesus is coming again and (2) God wants us to be ready for the glorious event. This is unfortunate because no matter how knowledgeable you may be on subjects such as pre-millennium, post-millennium, Armageddon, 666 and so on, what good is it if you are not prepared for his coming?

Look at verses 35-37. *"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. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"* We must keep watch because we do not know when Jesus will come. He may come today, tomorrow or in 2,000 years. He may come at 7:00 p.m. or at midnight. He may come at 4:00 a.m. or 5:00 a.m. Jesus says that we should not let him find us sleeping when he comes suddenly. Does this mean we should not sleep at all? Should we drink a lot of coffee and stay awake 24-7? Well, no one can survive long without sleep. More importantly, we may be physically awake but spiritually sleeping. We may be awake, but not watchful.

So what does it mean to be watchful as we wait for the second coming of Jesus? How can we get ready? It is of no use to calculate or speculate the time because no one will know the exact timing. So what can we do? Actually the answer to this question is simple. We should be doing what we are supposed to do as the committed disciples of Jesus. We should walk with Jesus everyday by faith obeying his words. Jesus also taught us in this chapter some specific things we can do to prepare ourselves for his coming: we should be spiritually alert so that we may not be deceived (5-6; 33); we should be preaching the gospel of Jesus to all nations, even in the midst of persecutions (9-11; 34); we must stand firm to the end despite terrible things happening all around us; and we must pray and keep watch, knowing that we don't know when he will return. In other words, we should be working hard to fulfill his purpose in life. Most of all, we should be working hard to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel must first be preached to all nations (10). As long as we live a life of faith and mission it does not matter when Jesus comes again.

In conclusion, Jesus is coming soon to gather us and take us to the eternal kingdom of God. His second coming will be very different from his first coming. When he returns, he will come in clouds with great power and glory. It will be a wonderful day for those who have endured hardship for Jesus' name's sake. It will be a terrible day for those who have rejected the Savior.

Let us read verses 26-27 again. *"At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 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."*