

Mark 13:24-37
The Coming of the Son of Man

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²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

²⁸ “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

No One Knows That Day or Hour

³² “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard, keep awake.^[a] For you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants^[b] in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵ Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows,^[c] or in the morning— ³⁶ lest he come suddenly and find you asleep.³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

Prayer:

Gracious God our heavenly Father, we are so grateful that you sent your Son to this earth some 2,000 years ago in order to rescue a people for your name's sake. And we are grateful that your Son will come again and receive us and all God's people to himself. Help us by your Spirit to understand this passage today and glean the truths of your Word which are true and edifying to our understanding and our Christian lives. We need your help, and we look to you for your blessing. In Jesus name. Amen.

On May 17, 2016, I was at the DFW International Airport at the place where people coming off international flights would walk out and greet those waiting for them. I was waiting for my friend brother Zuala from northeast India to arrive whom I hadn't seen for 16 years. I was straining to catch a glimpse of him. I was so happy and excited that I was going to see him face-to-face after 16 years. I waited and waited in anticipation - finally, he came through the door and the mutual rejoicing began.

Waiting...with glad anticipation... is a major theme in today's text. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ has been waiting with anticipation for her Lord's return

There are several truths that our passage brings out today. First of all...

I. Jesus is coming with great power and glory. V. 24-26

This is the greatest and most fundamental truth in this passage today. We may not be able to figure out all the details that Jesus talks about that precede his coming, but we can figure this truth out: The Son of Man, Jesus, will come again to this earth with great power and glory. He will come not with just a moderate amount of power, but with great power. He will not come with just a bit of glory that if you look real hard you could see it, but with great glory – glory shining forth from his person like it did on the Mount of Transfiguration. It will be a magnificent glory, glory greater than the new day sun, glory which we have never seen and can hardly imagine.

How do we know he will come again in great power and glory? I'll give you five reasons:

A. Because his previous prophecies came true.

What he predicted that would happen in the first half of Mark chapter 13 happened exactly as he said it would. We looked at this last week. When his disciples were admiring the great beauty and glory of the temple in Jerusalem Jesus told them that it would be thrown down and there would not be a single stone left standing.

This was something unimaginable to these disciples. The temple in Jerusalem was the crowning jewel of the Hebrew religion. It was the center of their religious life and culture. It was a building of tremendous grandeur and beauty. It was protected by a three-walled fortress that made it virtually impenetrable by any invading army. But it was thrown down and burned to rubble in 70 AD by the Roman army led by Titus. Over a million Jews were slaughtered. The Christians in the city heeded Jesus' warning and escaped before the city fell.

So what Jesus talks about here in Mark 13:24 and following is of a different event, a event somewhere in the future, - the event of his return to earth at the end of the age. So we know Jesus will return because what he said would happen to Jerusalem happened and what he said will happen when he returns will surely also happen. Jesus has verified that he is a true prophet of God. What he predicted came to pass and his other predictions will surely come to pass. One fulfilled prophecy leads to a high degree of certainty that a second prophecy will also come to pass.

B. A second reason we know Jesus will come again in power and glory is because the Day of the Lord waits to be fulfilled.

GE Ladd, p. 600

“in the OT, the ‘day of the Lord’ could designate a day in the immediate historical future when God would visit his people in judgment (Amos 5:18, c. Isa. 2;12ff. It

could also designate the final visitation of God when he would establish his kingdom in the world bringing salvation to the faithful and judgment to the wicked (Zeph. 1:14ff; Joel 3:14ff.

Ezek. 30:3 – Day of Judgment

For the day is near,
the day of the Lord is near;
 it will be a day of clouds,
 a time of doom for the nations.

Joel 2:30-32 Day of Salvation

30 “And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. 31 The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 32 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

In the NT the term has become a technical expression for the day when God will visit the world to bring this age to its end and to inaugurate the Age to Come. The term is not to be thought of as a single calendar day but as the entire period that will witness the final redemptive visitation of God in Christ.” P. 600, Ladd

Acts 2:16-21

¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ (Q)“And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
 (R)that I will pour out my Spirit (S)on all flesh,
 and your sons and (T)your daughters shall prophesy,
 and your young men shall see visions,
 and your old men shall dream dreams;

¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and (U)they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
 and signs on the earth below,
 blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

²⁰ (V)the sun shall be turned to darkness
 and the moon to blood,
 before (W)the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that (X)everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

This Day of the Lord waits to be fulfilled.

Three words describe the return of the Lord:

Parousia = both presence and arrival. That is, the personal presence of Christ when he will visit the earth again at the end of the age.

Apocalypse = unveiling or disclosure – “The power and glory that are now his by virtue of his exaltation and heavenly session will be disclosed to the world. (see phil. 2;10-11)

Epiphany= appearing – the visibility of his return.

See 2 Thess. 2:8:

⁸ And then ^(A)the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus ^(B)will kill with ^(C)the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by ^(D)the appearance of his coming. “ = the “appearing of his personal presence.”

Phil. 2:16 - ⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

1 Thess. 5:2 - **2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.**

C. OT prophecies of Yahweh coming to live among his people

Isa. 40:10-11 - ^(A)Behold, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
^(B)behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

¹¹ ^(C)He will tend his flock like a shepherd;
^(D)he will gather the lambs in his arms;
^(E)he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

Jer. 35:25-26

²⁵ Thus says the Lord: ^(L)If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, ²⁶ then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ^(M)For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.”

Joel 3:16 - ^(C)The Lord roars from Zion,
and ^(D)utters his voice from Jerusalem,
^(E)and the heavens and the earth quake.
But the Lord is ^(F)a refuge to his people,
a stronghold to the people of Israel.

Dan. 7:13-14 - ¹³“I saw in the night visions,

and ^(AF)behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the ^(AG)Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.

¹⁴ ^(AH)And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all ^(AI)peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;

^(AJ)his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.

So, the Day of the Lord waits to be fulfilled.

D. Jesus' own word in other places

Matt. 25:31-33

³¹ ^(AK)“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with
him, ^(AL)then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him ^(AM)will be
gathered ^(AN)all the nations, and ^(AO)he will separate people one from another as a
shepherd separates ^(AP)the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep
on his right, but the goats on the left

John 14:3 - ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will
take you ^(E)to myself, that ^(E)where I am you may be also.

E. Angel's testimony

Acts 1:10-11 - ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went,
behold, ^(A)two ^(B)men stood by them in ^(C)white robes, ¹¹ and said, ^(D)“Men of Galilee, why
do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into
heaven, ^(E)will ^(F)come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

These are 5 Scriptural reasons why we know ***Jesus will return in power and glory***:

Previous prophecy

Day of Lord waits to be fulfilled

OT prophecies of Yahweh coming to live among his people

Jesus' own word in other places

Angel's testimony

A second great truth we learn in this passage is that...

II. Jesus will gather the elect people of God from earth and heaven. V. 27

²⁷ And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

OT speaks of God gathering his people:

Ezek 36:24 - ²⁴ (A) I will take you (B) from the nations and gather you from all the countries and (C) bring you into your own land.

1 Thes. 4:13-18

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, (AD) that you may not grieve as others do (AE) who have no hope. ¹⁴ For (AF) since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him (AG) those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you (AH) by a word from the Lord, (AI) that (AJ) we who are alive, who are left until (AK) the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For (AL) the Lord himself will descend (AM) from heaven (AN) with a cry of command, with the voice of (AO) an archangel, and (AP) with the sound of the trumpet of God. And (AQ) the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be (AR) caught up together with them (AS) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so (AT) we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Calvin (Quoted by C. Cranfield., p. 407) –

Whenever, therefore we perceive the Church scattered by the wiles of Satan, or torn in pieces by the cruelty of the ungodly, or disturbed by false doctrines, or tossed y storms, let us learn to turn our eyes to this “***gathering of the elect.***” And if it appears to us a thing difficult to be believed, let us call to remembrance the power of the angels, which Christ holds out to us for the express purpose of raising our views above human means. For, though the Church be now tormented by the malice of men, or even broken by the violence of the billows, and miserably torn in pieces, so as to have no stability in the world, yet we ought always to cherish confident hope, because it will not be by human means, but by heavenly power, which will be far superior to every obstacle, that the Lord will gather his church.”

A third great truth:

III. Disturbances in the heavens will precede Christ’s coming.

When you see the signs (in v. 24-25)...

²⁴ “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

... then know the consummation is near.

V. 28-31

²⁸ “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The question of “this generation”...

- a. The generation that sees these signs...

What are the signs?

Heavenly disturbances

IV. The day and hour of Christ’s coming is known only to the Father. V. 32

³² “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Acts 1:6-7 - ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, (A) will you at this time (B) restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, (C) “It is not for you to know (D) times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

V. We are to stay awake and be looking for Christ’s return. V. 33-37

Parable of departed Master –

Responsibilities left for each person and doorkeeper especially.

Waiting...with alertness... is a major theme in today’s text. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ has been waiting with anticipation for her Lord’s return. Every generation looks and waits and anticipates and we are no different. The church today, the people of God, should be waiting, anticipating, alert and watchful.

We should be looking and waiting and watchful because it means face to face union with our Lord and Savior:

There’s an old hymn that goes like this:

What a day that will be,
 When my Jesus I shall see,
 And I look upon His face,
 The One who saved me by His grace;
 When He takes me by the hand,
 And leads me through the Promised Land,
 What a day, glorious day that will be.

The coming of Jesus Christ, his second coming to this earth, is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Hear these words from the ancient Nicene Creed (“creed” comes from the word “credo” = I believe):

For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at
the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

Please repeat with me: ***He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.***

This statement from the Nicene Creed is absolutely true because it comes directly out of the Word of God. The scriptures are plain and clear that Jesus will come again, not in humility and obscurity, but he will come in glory – with the glory of God. And he will come to judge all people – those who have died in previous generations and those who are alive now. And his kingdom will never end – it will last forever and ever as God renovates the earth and heavenly bodies and establishes a new heaven and new earth. When he comes he will raise his people from the dead, from their graves, and clothe them with resurrection bodies like his own resurrection bodies.

And from our own church’s statement on the coming of the Son of Man:

Article 12- The Second Coming of Jesus Christ & The Eternal State

We believe in the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ who will come back to earth just as he left, only this time with power and great glory to establish the kingdom of God in the fullest sense and to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. This is our blessed hope and we eagerly await his coming while being watchful and also working to establish his kingdom on earth in the hearts of men. He will come as the Judge of the living and the dead. (John 5:28-29) Both the just and the unjust will be resurrected, the just, the redeemed, to participate in their resurrected and glorified bodies in the eternal blessedness of heaven in the presence of God, and the unjust to suffer the eternal punishment reserved for the devil and his angels. In accordance with God’s redemptive purpose and in fulfillment of his covenant promise he ‘will dwell in the midst of his people’ in a new heaven and new earth. (Eph.1:9-10; Rev.21:1)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
"See, the home of God is among mankind;

He will dwell with them;
 they will be his people,
 and God himself will be with them,
 and be their God.” (Rev.21:3)

Note: personal union and fellowship with Christ.

The blessed hope: Titus 2:8-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Heb. 9:28 -

so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are **eagerly** waiting for him.

Why eagerness?

Union with our Savior

Deliverance from evil, sin, suffering

We'll behold the glory of God in face of Christ.

Judgment on the wicked – vindication of God's righteous rule.

2 Pet. 3:10 - 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

It will come suddenly. We must wait and watch. It will be total renovation.

With power and glory, he'll come again,
 With power and glory, the Lord will descend,
 He'll rend the heavens,
 And make his glory known,
 Every eye shall see him,
 When he comes for his own. (song by Jeff Gregory, 1986)

He's coming. Let's be looking for him every day and live our lives so to please and honor him.

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