

That Day is Coming!

- Mark 13:14-27; 32-37
- The first time I heard Bill and Gloria Gaither's song, "The King is Coming," was the only time I saw The New Directions in concert as a teenager. I believe it was JL Williams who sang the lead. But I was a brand new Christian and the words of this song sent chills down my spine, thinking about the Lord's return.
- "The marketplace is empty, No more traffic in the streets, All the builders' tools are silent, No more time to harvest wheat; Busy housewives cease their labors, In the courtroom no debate, Work on earth is all suspended As the King comes thro' the gate. O the King is coming, The King is coming! I just heard the trumpets sounding, And now His face I see; O the King is coming, The King is coming! Praise God, He's coming for me!"
- He is coming! Praise God, He IS coming. But before he comes back, the earth will go through a time of great tribulation. The birth pains will increase in frequency and intensity before we see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. Let's look at what the Lord told his disciples in this chapter about that under three main points: During the Tribulation, After the Tribulation, and What we should be doing now. And, put a bookmark in 2 Thessalonians. We will be back and forth between this text and that one.
- **During the tribulation (verses 14-23)**
- We saw last week that the first part of these verses, verse 14-18, have a double-referent, it is believed. The abomination of desolation and the terrible destruction that is coming first refers to the siege of Jerusalem by Titus and the Roman Army in AD 70. It is estimated that more than one million Jews died in that siege, and many died because they ran into the city instead of doing what Jesus said to do, to flee to the mountains. Second, it refers to the last advent, or, the second coming.
- "Standing where he ought not to be" also has a double or triple referent. Some say it refers to the Roman emperor Caligula, who ruled in 37-41 and decided to erect statues of himself in the temple and have them worshiped as gods. His order was refused by the general in charge of operations and Caligula was then assassinated. Others say this refers to Titus, who obviously stood in the midst of the temple after its destruction. But most believe that Jesus is referring to the Man of Lawlessness, a blasphemous Antichrist who will at some time in the future unleash a terrible tribulation on God's people which will be followed by the return of Christ.
- Many believe Daniel prophesied about this man of lawlessness when he wrote, "He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper until the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done." (Daniel 11:36) Paul talked about this man in 2 Thessalonians as he tried to encourage the saints there that Jesus had not come back yet, contrary to popular opinion, and that he would not come back until this man of lawlessness appeared. **Read 2 Thess. 2:3-5.**
- If the temple referenced there is a new temple, then the Dome of the Rock will have to be destroyed and the Jewish temple will have to be rebuilt before the end can come. But

many have interpreted that to mean this man of lawlessness will exalt himself above God and proclaim that to the church. Or simply that he will seat himself in the place of God, claiming to be God. He is not Satan, but he works by the power of Satan, and will work false signs and wonders by that power. **Look at 2 Thess. 2:9-12.** What will happen to the Man of Lawlessness? **Look at 2 Thess. 2:8** The tribulation will be at its highest point during this man's reign of terror. Daniel wrote, "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book." (Daniel 12:1)

- The time of tribulation will bring suffering like the world has never seen, but three times in this text Jesus promises that the elect will be delivered, two in this section, one in the next. **Look at Verses 20 and 22. Those verses sound to me like the church, the believers, are still here on the earth during tribulation.** But maybe not! Those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture would say that refers to those who are elect but not yet saved. They are preserved and saved during this intense time of suffering. And that may be true. That brings us to...
- **After the tribulation (verses 24-27)**
- We have seen the phrase, "in those days" we talked about last week that we believe Mark was using to refer to the last days. In verse 19, "in those days," and now again in verse 24. Now some incredible things happen that, if you just take the plain sense of them, can only point to the end of time as we know it. The sun is darkened, the moon doesn't shine, the stars fall from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. The picture is one of a cataclysmic collapse of the world as we know it. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken, as the writer of Hebrews said, "in order that the things that cannot be shaken will remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken...and offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe." (Heb. 12:27-28)
- We know the sun went out for three hours when Jesus was on the cross, and that time was one of great sorrow for his followers because they did not understand the great victory OVER darkness that was taking place. But in those days, referring to the end, when the sun and the moon and the stars stop doing what they were created to do, and the heavens are shaken, it is a signal of the GREATEST event to come, the second advent, the return of the Son of Man. Again, Jesus refers to the prophet Daniel and his vision of the last days, as Daniel wrote, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:3-14) Jesus referred to himself often as the Son of Man. Daniel prophesied that the Ancient of Days, God, would give the kingdom to the Son of Man, Jesus.
- Verse 26, "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory." WHO will see Him? The whole earth! Revelation 1:7, "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him."

- The angels will gather the elect from every corner of the earth. THIS is the true meaning of no child left behind. All over the earth, from every tribe and tongue and people group, the elect will arise. **Look at 1 Thess. 4:16-18.** The dead in Christ first, and then those in Christ who are still alive with them, and all the saints will converge at a single point: the Son of Man. And so we will always be with the Lord. That leads us to the final point.
- **What should we be doing now? (verses 32-37)**
- Jesus said “be on your guard” twice in this teaching, in verse 9 and 23, and he says it again in verse 33. In this discourse, he gives us some very important instructions.
- **First, do not become an end times prophet.** As we said last week, it seems to be Jesus’ primary purpose here to warn us not to immerse ourselves in “end time speculation” at the expense of present-day obedience.
- **Second, stay awake.** He says it four different times, stay awake. He illustrates the command with a parable about a man who went on a journey, leaving his servants behind. What are the servants to do while the man in charge is on a journey? Are they to spend all their days trying to calculate exactly when he will return, and let the farm and the business fall apart? No, in fact Jesus says he leaves the servants in charge. He gives them “exousia,” authority to represent the master, “each with his work.” So, staying awake means doing what we are on the earth to do for the Lord and His name’s sake.
- **Third, watch for and have great hope in the return of the Lord.** That’s what the doorkeeper in this parable is told to do. The master commands the doorkeeper to “stay awake.” In other words, doorkeeper, you have one job: watch. James Edwards writes the doorkeeper’s only job is to, “Live faithfully in the present, being attentive to the signs, and being ready at any hour for the return of the master.” We are called to be doorkeepers. I like that image because the doorkeeper had to stay awake and keep watch. But he or she also had to be ready to open the door when someone was ready to come in. Jesus said in John 10, “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.” (John 10:9) Hey, Antioch doorkeepers! Stay at your post and invite people in.” What does it look like when we are not watching with great hope and staying awake? Paul wrote about that as well, in 2 Thessalonians. **Read 2 Thess. 3:6-15**
- We must stay awake! Jesus includes us in this, we know, because of how he ended this discourse: “And what I say to you I say to all: stay awake.” This promise of his coming is not an excuse for laziness or complacency in the church and in our witness to the community It is a call to faithfulness.
- John Wesley was asked once, “What would you do tomorrow if you knew Jesus was going to return in the evening?” He took out his diary of preaching engagements he had the following day and said, “These are the things I would do tomorrow if I knew the Lord was returning then.” He would simply stay at his post, standing by the door and inviting people to come in.
- The second verse of “The King is Coming” goes like this:
- Happy faces line the hallways, Those whose lives have been redeemed, Broken homes that He has mended, Those from prison He has freed; Little children and the aged Hand in hand stand all aglow, Who were crippled, broken, ruined, Clad in garments white as snow. **Sing with me!** The King is coming, The King is coming! I just heard the trumpets

sounding, And now His face I see; O the King is coming, The King is coming! Praise God,
He's coming for me!"

- Prayer
- **Greet One Another**