**The Son of Man is Coming**

November 17, 2013

Mark 13:24-37

Key Verse: 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.”

Have you experienced waiting for a big day? When I was in high school, the day of college entrance exam was a most dreadful day for many people. I was so anxious that I could not sleep well. Waiting is anticipation. Have you seen yellow ribbons tied around trees? The song, “Tie a Yellow Ribbon Around the Old Oak Tree,” is about a woman who was waiting for her husband to return home from prison. The husband was about to be released and he wrote a letter to his wife, “If you forgive me and accept me, tie a yellow ribbon around the old oak tree in our village. If there is the yellow ribbon, I will get off the bus and come to you. If there is no yellow ribbon, I will stay in the bus and go far away from you.” Everybody in the bus with him knew about his story and as the bus approached his village, they looked out in anticipation. As the bus turned the corner, everybody shouted in excitement. The oak tree was covered with yellow ribbons, not just one, but hundreds. His wife was waiting for him, tying a yellow ribbon every day with the hope of uniting with him. Waiting is hope. What are you waiting for? What gives you excitement and hope? What are you preparing for today while enduring many trials? Jesus is coming soon. Today we will study what Jesus will do when he comes again with power and glory. What should be our attitude while waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus? I pray that we may keep watch in doing his assigned task faithfully. May God bless us to have spiritual awakening to serve his will in our generation.

Look at verses 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.” What does “the Son of Man” mean here? Mark 10:45 says, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” The Son of Man refers to Jesus who became flesh and lived among men to save them from the power of sin and death. Though Jesus was the Son of God, he also became the Son of Man so as to be with us so that he might become our friend and shepherd. He suffered much to be our good shepherd. He laid down his life to save us from the power of Satan.

According to verse 26, men will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. All the troubles mentioned in the previous passage is nothing but a prelude of the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus’ second coming was promised in the Bible many times. Jesus said in John 14:3, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” Someone may say, ‘What takes him so long to come again?” I don’t know why he takes time to come back. Maybe it takes time for him to prepare a place for all of us. Or maybe God has a different calendar. 2 Peter 3:8 says, “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” How many days have passed since Jesus ascended into the heaven? Just two days have passed. Acts 1:11 says, “Men of Galilee,” they said, “Why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” Jesus promised to come back and to the early Christians the coming of the Lord was a great source of encouragement to overcome the fiery persecutions from the Roman Emperors.

How are his first and second comings different? When our Lord Jesus first came to this world, he came as a baby in a manger even though he had the life of God in him. But at his second coming we will see the Son of Man coming in clouds in great power and glory. This means Jesus is not coming to graciously forgive the wicked; he is coming as the Judge of the living and the dead. In Warren Wiersbe’s, “Meet Yourself in the Psalms,” he tells about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon. The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience. But the words from the bench silenced his plea: “Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged.”

Hardly anyone welcomed Jesus at his first coming except animals because he was born in manger. But at his second coming all men will see him coming in glory and power. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.” All men will hear the loud command and the trumpet sound and then they will see Jesus coming with power and glory. What a spectacular event this will be! It is hard to wait for that day.

What will he do when he comes? He will send his angels to gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens (27). Who are his elect? His elect are not the billionaires like Bill Gates, powerful people like Obama, but we who have acknowledged Jesus

as Lord and Savior. In the movie 2012, only billionaires and powerful politicians were saved. But when Jesus comes again, power and money do not matter. Those billionaires will be condemned. Sometimes we feel that our Lord Jesus Christ would not remember what we did and suffered. But let’s read verse 27. It says, “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.” It is great encouragement for us that he remembers each of us, that we dedicated ourselves to him, and gave our time to him, and sacrificed for the sheep, and in his name were despised and rejected. Our Lord God never ignores his elect. The coming of Jesus is a great day for all believers because Jesus gathers them to be with him. But it will be a sad day for those who rejected Jesus because they will be judged according to what they had done in this life.

Look at verses 32-33. “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.” Throughout history, from the day of Jesus’ ascension, people hoped Jesus would come again. This has continued for the last twenty centuries. Everyone, including non-Christians, is curious about the day and hour of the second coming of Jesus. But Jesus declared that no one knows except the Father. Do not waste your time to figure out when Jesus would come again. Two years ago, someone prophesied that Jesus would come again on May 21, 2011 and it would be the time of rapture. Many people believed his prediction and quit their jobs. On that day, they waited all night long. But Jesus did not come. Why did Jesus not tell us when he was coming again? It is because there is a danger that people will rest full time until the day Jesus comes again. Then on the day Jesus is coming again, they will repent and accept Jesus and want to be in the rapture. So Jesus made his second coming secret. Jesus once said, “If the owner of the house had known the hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (Lk 12:39)

Jesus told us signs to watch for, but not the time. This was God’s wisdom to help man who is lazy and naturally procrastinates. Many students do not begin their term paper, until a few days before it is due. But if we did not know when the paper was due, we would have to do it early, just in case. When we examine the Bible, we find that the first century Christians had a great hope in the Second Coming. They were expecting to see it in their lifetime. When they woke up in the morning, they took an exhilarating breath and said, “this could be the day!” 1 Cor 7:29 says that the time is short. Although Jesus did not come in the first century, the early Christians were wise to have this expectation. In fact, even though Jesus did not come, many of the early Christians were martyred suddenly. But they were prepared, because they were eagerly watching for Jesus.

These days, there are many people who say, “I want to be a Christian, but not now.” Such people are deceived by the devil, who says, “You can do it tomorrow.” But there may not be a tomorrow if Jesus comes again today. Think seriously that today could be the last day of the world. All of the signs are already here. Therefore, you should be alert and maximize your day completing all the tasks you supposed to do. That’s reason why Jesus said repeatedly, “Be on your guard! Be alert! Keep watch!”

For example, the people of Noah's times only engaged in eating and drinking, web-surfing, chatting, and giving in marriage. They never imagined that God would judge those who became flesh and were sinning against God. They did not listen to God’s warning about the impending flood judgment. They had a lot of fun and good times. They were not alert. The flood came suddenly, but their swimming ability was poor. So they all drowned except Noah and his family members, who had listened to God. Therefore, we must keep watch through prayers and Bible study.

What should we do while waiting for the second coming of Jesus? Look at verse 34. “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.” Here we learn that each of us has his assigned task from Jesus. It is our mission to preach the gospel to all nations. Apostle Paul said in Acts 20:24, “However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.” He found a life-long task to testify the gospel of God’s grace instead of calculating the day of Jesus’ second coming. He considered his task more than his life. Do you have a task to complete? Then keep watch until you finish the task. If you are a student, complete your homework assignment on time.

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!’” These verses teach us that we must live the life of mission with spiritual awakening. The first words of this sermon of Jesus was “watch out,” and the last word is “watch!”

Watching may sound easy. But watching is hard and important work. We get tired. If the soldier falls asleep on his watch, the enemy may attack; it is a very important job. In the battle of the plains of Abraham, the French had superior army and they were protected by a high cliff called Heights of Abraham. But the guard fell asleep and did not warn that British soldiers were climbing the cliff. French lost Quebec after the defeat. Verse 34 tells us that watching involves doing our assigned task. In the hope of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ we do not waste time, but work hard day and night for the glory of God. We cannot allow ourselves to become sleepy, drowsy, complacent, and lazy spiritually. What is the best time for Jesus to come? The best time is when we have 1:1 Bible study with sheep or we pray in the early morning or we have Sunday worship. But we cannot control the time. Therefore, Jesus said, “I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

Are you excited about the coming of the Son of Man? What are you doing to prepare for his coming? If you are, then you are alert spiritually. Otherwise, you are sleeping. Let’s be alert and keep watch and be faithful to God, standing firm on his promises so that when Jesus comes again his glory, we may be ready to welcome him.