**The Son of Man is Coming**

November 22, 2020

Mark 13:24-37

Key Verse: 13:26-27 “At that time people 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 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.” In the long bus ride, the husband shared his story with everybody in the bus. As the bus approached his village, everyone 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. Waiting is anticipation. What are you waiting for? What gives you excitement and hope? What are you preparing today while enduring many trials? Jesus is coming soon. Today we will study what Jesus will do when he comes again with great power and glory. What should be our attitude while waiting for his coming? 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 24-25. “But in those days, following that distress, ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’” Before Jesus comes again, the universe will collapse after the distresses mentioned in earlier verses. Recall that there will be earthquakes and famines; wars and rumors of wars. There will be persecutions of true believers of God, and breakdown of family relationships. There will be many false messiahs to deceive people. After the great tribulation, great signs will be occurring on the earth and in the sky. The sun will become dark and the moon will refuse to shine. This description is from the Old Testament. Joel 2:31 says, “The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon to blood before the great and the dreadful day of the LORD.” Can you imagine the horror that will grip humanity as these events begin upon the earth? For as long as men have lived upon the earth, the sun has shown forth her light. Without fail, each morning the sun has risen, bringing light and hope to the world. But in that day the sun will be darkened, and mankind will be left to ponder the reason for such calamity. Even the night will be enveloped in a menacing darkness. Without the light of the sun, the moon will have no light to reflect. The darkness will continue day and night, leaving men alone with their thoughts and fears. The sun becoming dark will not be the only sign of the Lord’s imminent return. Following the darkness of the sun and moon, the stars will begin to fall from the heavens. In his omnipotent power, the Lord will shake the heavens and the stars will fall from their places. No doubt some of them will impact the earth, creating devastation throughout the world. God created the universe and upholds it today by the word of his power. However, in that day he will cause the heavenly bodies to fall from the sky, revealing his power to the earth. We cannot imagine the horror and dismay this will bring upon the earth.

Look at verses 26. “At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.” 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 and 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. This Jesus will visibly return to the earth following the great tribulation. This will be a glorious sight for those who have believed in Christ by faith, but it will strike terror in the hearts of those who have denied and rejected his grace. The nations of the earth will mourn as they see him coming in the clouds. There will be no doubt as to his identity. Every eye will see him and immediately recognize who he is! Revelation.1:7 says, “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him.”

The second advent will be much different from the first. When Jesus came the first time, hardly anyone welcomed Jesus at his first coming except animals because he was born in a manger. He was rejected by his own people, sentenced to death, humiliated, beaten, and crucified. The crowds mocked and sneered as he died on the cross. The second advent will not be like the first. When Jesus returns in the clouds, he will come with great power and glory. There will be no mistaking his identity when he returns. The world will see and know that the King of kings and Lord of lords has returned in power! 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 book, “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.”

What will Jesus 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 the prime minister, 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 look at verse 27 again. “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 Bible students, 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 forever. 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. Many people, including non-Christians, are 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. 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 day 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 enjoy their sinful lives 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 Corinthians 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 are 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 time only engaged in eating and drinking, youtube watching, and giving in marriage. They never imagined that God would judge those who 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 assigned tasks 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 to 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 on time. So watching involves doing our assigned task. In the hope of Jesus’ second coming, 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 are having 1:1 Bible study with Bible students or we are praying, or we are having Sunday worship service. But we cannot control the time. Therefore, Jesus said, “I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’” 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 Jesus in this sermon was “watch out,” and the last word is “watch!”

Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch survivor of the Nazi Concentration Camp, wrote in 1974, “There are some among us teaching that there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this…I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution. In China, the Christians were told, “Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be raptured.” Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death by Mao Tse Tung. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, sadly, ‘We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution rather than telling them Jesus would come first. Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes — to stand and not faint.’ I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ…There is no way to escape it.” Waiting for Jesus’ second coming does not mean to escape this troubled world. We have to face the troubles in this world. Then when Jesus comes again, he will say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant!”

Are you longing for the coming of the Son of Man? Let’s be alert and keep watch and be faithful to God, standing firm on his promises so that when Jesus comes again in glory, we may be ready to welcome him. The early Christians greeted each other by saying, “Marana tha” meaning, “Come, Lord!” It is also our prayer.

Big Idea: Come, Lord Jesus