

precious time in speculation, trying to set and/or announce the date of his coming.

3. Such speculation disturbs and destroys the faith of weak, unstable souls.

III. EXHORTATION TO WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER (13:33-37).

- A. For ye know not: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (33).
 1. All can "take heed, watch and pray." Since it is impossible for any man to know "when the time is," the faithful must be ready every day.
 2. To "watch" means, according to Thayer, "to give strict attention to, be cautious, active;" "or to state the same thing another way, to stay awake, keep your eyes open, be on guard."--Annual Lesson Commentary, 8-30-64.
- B. Also the porter: "It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch" (34).
 1. The Lord himself was preparing to leave his servants, having given to each one his work, authority and trust.
 2. "House" often means family in the Bible.
 3. The "porter" was doorkeeper, a duty of great trust in the house.
- C. Find you sleeping: "Watch therefore: for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" (35,36).
 1. The language of the parable is carried throughout these verses.
 2. The apostles were watchmen in a special sense, yet we today have great responsibility to watch soberly (Romans 13:11-14; Eph. 5:11-14; 1 Thes. 5:4-8).
- D. Watch: "And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch" (37).
 1. Matthew records three parables as additional emphasis (25:1-46).
 2. The closing lesson that day in answering their questions was his descriptive picture of the final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46).

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON THIRTY-NINE

The Second Coming of Christ

Mark 13:24-37; Matt. 24:29-51; Luke 21:25-36

INTRODUCTION -

I. LESSON LINKS AND CONTEXT.

- A. Our last lesson dealt with the signs Jesus gave the disciples which would precede and signal the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.
- B. In that address to Peter, James, John and Andrew, "as he sat on the mount of Olives" (13:3,4), the Lord also answered their question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world" (Mt.24:3)?

II. NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE LESSON.

- A. Commentators generally understand the portion of the prediction of Jesus in this lesson to refer to the end of the world and his second coming. However, some, including Clarke, try to make it apply to the falling of the Jewish state, "immediately" (Matt. 24:29) after the destruction of Jerusalem.
- B. Though "the disciples, in their question, had confounded the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world" (M. Henry), the Lord seems to correct their mistake in his reply so as to show clearly the second coming was to be separated by a period equal to that called in Luke 21:44, "the times of the Gentiles," from the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the Jews.
- C. It may indeed be true that Mark 13:24-31 refers to both (1) the destruction of Jerusalem and (2) the end of the world and the second coming, the former being a type of the latter.

DISCUSSION -

I. THE COMING OF THE LORD (13:24-27).

- A. In those days: "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light" (24).
 1. According to Matthew, the events of this paragraph were to occur "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (24:29).
 2. This is a most difficult prophecy to explain, because it seems to link the second coming with the destruction of Jerusalem. McGarvey-Pendleton give three ways in which it may be explained: (a) That Jesus reckons the time after his own, and not after our human fashion (cf. 2 Peter 3:4-9). (b) That the terrible judgment upon Jerusalem and the

- corresponding terror of the judgment day have between them no intervening season of judgment in any way worthy to be compared to either of them. The two periods, therefore, stand with regard to each other in immediate connection. (c) The tribulation which came upon the Jewish people merely began with the destruction of Jerusalem, other woes followed at once, and, coming down through all the centuries of wandering and dispersion, they were yet unfulfilled and incomplete. p. 629.
3. Johnson expresses the most likely meaning: "Immediately" after the destruction of Jerusalem (the tribulation) the series of events begins that leads to the coming of Christ. p. 132.
- B. Stars falling, heavenly powers shaken: "And the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken" (25).
1. The words concerning the darkened sun, falling stars, lightless moon, and the shaken heavenly powers is the language of the prophets (Amos 8:9; Isa. 34:4,5; Ezek. 32:7; Jer. 15:9; Joel 2:10,11,30,31; 3:15; Rev. 6:12-14). And some understand Jesus to mean by this the eclipse of the nation and the downfall of rulers or great teachers which culminated in the apostasy and dark ages.
 2. It is more likely however that Jesus uses those terms to describe the end of time and final judgment (cf. 2 Peter 3:10; Heb. 1:12; Rev. 20:11).
- C. The Son of man coming: "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (26).
1. According to Matthew his visible coming is preceded by the appearing of "the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn" (24:30).
 2. The "sign" of the Lord's coming is evidently the actual, personal and glorious appearance of the Lord himself (cf. Mark 14:62; Acts 1:11).
 3. "Then shall they see the Son of man coming" (Cf. Rev. 1:7; Luke 21:27).
 4. The mourning described is by that majority of unprepared souls who will realize too late the terrible sorrow which will follow judgment.
- D. Send forth the angels: "And then shall he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of the sea" (27).
1. "Angel" means messenger. Compare Matt. 13:41,49; 2 Thes. 1:6-9).
 2. These words furnish strong support for applying this passage to the final consummation of things.
- II. PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE (13:28-31; Matt. 24:32-35; Lk.21:29-33).
- A. Learn her parable: "Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh" (28).
- In the natural world, there are signs of the change of seasons. The budding fig tree, usually in April, means "summer is near."
- B. When ye see these things: "Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors" (29).
1. According to Matt. 24:33, "all these things" are to come and be seen before "it" (or "he") appears.
 2. David Lipscomb says, "It is difficult to fix the definite meaning of this sentence." (p. 314).
 3. In truth, the Christian must be ready always, for our going to meet the Lord could be any day.
- C. This generation: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished" (30).
1. "All these things" must be understood here, as in verse 29, as preceding and excluding his coming.
 2. "This generation" may mean the Jews as a race. But it more likely means those then living upon earth. Commentators differ widely here.
- D. Shall not pass away: "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (31).
1. The temple appeared to be so permanent to the disciples they could hardly believe the prediction of Jesus concerning its destruction.
 2. He assures them however that they can believe his words with absolute certainty. His words are more abiding than the most permanent part of heaven and earth. Let us not fail to learn this lesson!
- E. Knoweth no one: "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (32).
1. The time of the second coming is God's profound secret.
 2. It is therefore utterly foolish for men to waste