

Theme: - Getting ready

Now at the beginning of our reading he speaks of the sun being darkened the moon not giving it's light, the stars falling out of heaven, and the powers in the heavens being shaken. This contrasts with the beginning of Genesis where we read, "In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void, so God created the sun, the moon, and the stars.

Our first sentence starts, "But in those day, after the suffering." After the suffering refers to the beginning of chapter 13 verses 5 to 13 where Jesus talks about the destruction of the temple, of wars and rumours of wars, earthquakes, and famines. Now the word 'but' also indicates a change, because now the earthquakes and famines have finished, and now the Sun is darkened, the moon does not show any light, and the stars will be falling from heaven and the powers in the heavens will be shaken, and the earth will have returned to its chaotic state that existed before God's creation. The 'but' contrasts the things that went before in verses 5 to 13 with that which followed in verses 24 to 27.

Now after these momentous and frightening happenings we are told that, "the Son of Man will be coming in clouds" with great power and glory. This of course is speaking of the second coming when Jesus will come as king of the entire universe. Jesus called himself the Son of Man, possibly after the angel who appeared to Mary who told her, "You will bear a son, and he will be called the Son of the Most High, that is the Son of God. Jesus didn't want to be called the Messiah because the Jews were expecting the Messiah to be an army general to drive the Romans out of Israel.

Verse 27 reads, "Then he will send out his angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven." In Deuteronomy chapter 30 God tells the Israelites, "Even if you are exiled to the ends of the world, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there he will bring you back." And here in Mark chapter 13 verse 27 Mark repeats Jesus' promise for us who have faith in and who follow Christ when he said, "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." In acts chapter 2 verse 17 and 21 Luke wrote, "In the last days, God says, 'I will pour out my spirit on all people. And everyone who calls on the Lord will be saved.'"

Verse 28 starts, "From the fig tree, learn its lesson." This is a parable about times; Jesus said when you see a fig tree sprout it's leaves then you know it is springtime; in the same way when you see the Sun go out and the stars fall from heaven you will know that the Son of Man is coming. In using a fig tree, and it's sprouting leaves and blossom, would suggest that it was springtime when this occurred, and that he used the blossoming fig tree as a visual aid to make his point clear and memorable. This parable was probably in response to the disciples asking for a sign as recorded in verse 4 just before our reading.

Verse 30 starts “Truly I tell you,” that means take special notice of what I am about to say. And he says, “This generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. The phrase, “about this generation not passing away until all these things have taken place,” troubles some people, but most schoolers agree that the phrase, “until all these things,” refers to the fall of the temple and the other signs mentioned in verses 5-23. they say that once the temple was destroyed, the Second Coming became imminent. However, Christ can come at any time. The important and vital message to take away from verse 30 is always to be ready for his coming as Jesus tells us on numerous occasions.

And he finished by saying, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.” Saying, “but my words will not pass away.” was a bold statement, but one that has withstood the test of time and history. Kingdoms have risen and fallen, tyrants have come and gone and have done everything in their power to eliminate Christianity, but people from all walks of life and in every land still look to Jesus as Lord and read the Bible as it was written 2,000 years ago.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” verse 32. There is no ambiguity here and clears up for me any problems I may have had with verse 30, Jesus did not know when he was coming back to wind up all things.

Verse 33 should for me have been preceded by Jesus’ phrase, “Truly I tell you,” because “Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come,” goes to the core of many of our problems. We live in a world full of temptations and distractions. We are regularly subjected to advertising that turns us away from God to material things, to friends who demand that we do things which we know Jesus wouldn’t approve of. We watch television films that glamorize violence, drugs and quite often sex, there are thousands of temptations out there. Sports are now quite often scheduled to take place on Sundays, shops are now open on Sundays forcing parents and children to choose between sports and faith. The list of temptations are endless. When we succumb to them, we suffer the consequences. Jesus urges us to be aware, and to keep alert.

Verse 34 reads, “It is like a man, going on a journey,” verses 34-36 is another short parable about a master going away and commanding his doorkeeper to be on the watch. Now in this parable God is the master, and we are his doorkeeper, charged to be on the watch and to stay alert. Paul warned the Thessalonians in chapter 5 verses 3,4, and 6 with these words, “For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.”

In verse 32 Jesus said, ‘for you don’t know when the lord of the house is coming’ Now in verse 35 Jesus has already stated that he doesn’t know the hour and If he doesn’t know, we certainly don’t know, but stresses that we are to keep awake.

Then Mark writes, “or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly,” which happened in the next chapter when Jesus found Peter James and John asleep.

But what constitutes wakefulness? What constitutes readiness? What do we need to be doing when the Master comes so that he will be pleased with us? Well Jesus said, “Whoever does the will of God, is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Mark chapter 3 verse 35. Keeping awake, of course, cannot mean that we must suffer chronic insomnia. Keeping awake has to do with spiritual wakefulness, spiritual preparation, spiritual readiness for Christ’s second coming.

Finally verse 37, “And what I say to you I say to all.” This is the point of the parable, that Jesus’ disciples, and all of us, must keep awake, and to be prepared for the second coming of the Son of Man.

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