

Sunday, January 22, 2017

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## Introduction to Mark 13:24-37

The second coming of Jesus is one of the core doctrines of Christianity. In Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, each chapter ends with a reminder that Jesus is coming back. It is the foundation of our future hope and the motivation for godly living in the present. It affirms that, in the end, every injustice will be corrected. Every wicked deed and thought will be held to account before Christ's judgment seat. Finally, all those who have committed themselves to Christ by faith will have their faith realized when we see Him face to face.

Yet despite the great comfort and caution we can derive from this doctrine, it is also true that it can be used to distract/ Many people who earnestly love the Lord can be so preoccupied with His second coming that they forget how He has called us to live in the meantime. Sadly, some who have taken this doctrine to its extreme have made poor choices and lost everything, when that was not God's intention in making it known to us. Therefore, it is all the more important that we pay careful attention to this teaching so that we can live faithfully according to God's purposes in the here-and-now.

### Context

This passage continues what is known as the "Olivet Discourse" (see also Matthew 24 and Luke 21). In the previous passage, Jesus discussed the events surrounding the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, elaborating on His comments about the end times. Once Jesus finishes this discussion of when He will return and the end of the age, the end of the week will come in which He will die and His disciples will be scattered. So it is of great importance that Jesus leave them with this teaching regarding His second coming in glory...

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 13:24-37

Two Answers

- Destruction of Jerusalem: 70 A.D.
- End of the Age... Coming of Christ

Coming of Christ

- Dramatic... Visible (26)
- Nations will mourn (Matt. 24:30; cf. Zech. 12:10)
- Believers gathered... Rejoicing (27)
- We don't know when! (32)
- Be on guard... watch... be faithful! (33)

## Discuss

- 1) Do you think too much or too little about Christ's second coming? Why do you think that is?
  
- 2) Read verses 26 and 32 again. How do those verses inform the way we think about people who claim to know exactly when Jesus will come back?
  
- 3) Jesus repeats the command to "watch" (NIV) or "stay awake" (ESV) twice in this passage (verses 35 and 37). How would you describe the difference between being spiritually "asleep" versus being spiritually "awake"? Or spiritual "neglect" versus spiritual "watchfulness"?
  
- 4) Read Isaiah 40:6-8. Then re-read Mark 13:31. How does this teaching of Jesus (which is echoed in Isaiah) help us prioritize what we should devote our time and energy to?
  
- 5) The second coming of Christ is comforting good news for those who have turned from their sins and trusted in Him. But for those who have not, it is terrible news. Who are some people in your life who don't know Christ that we can be praying for? And how can we encourage one another to be bold in sharing the gospel with them?