

Coming of the Son of Man

Mark 13:14-27
SS Lesson for 02/27/11

Devotional Scripture: 1 Thess 4:13-18

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The concept of the outline of the lesson came Bible Expositor and Illuminator. This week's lesson advises us about the **Coming of Jesus, the Son of Man**. The **study's aim** is to examine some of the signs that will precede the second coming of our Lord Jesus to earth. The **study's application** is to realize that the Bible teaches us that Jesus is coming soon in glory, and that we must do all we can to be ready.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Who's in Charge Here?

Most of us probably have had this experience. We walk into a store or an office, and we see chaos. Surrounded by clutter, people are ignoring their responsibilities. As far as real work is concerned, nothing is being accomplished. We came expecting to receive service, but instead we are ignored. What do we do in such a situation? We probably ask, "Who's in charge here?" We want to speak to anyone with responsibility to keep order and get things done. When we see mayhem, we assign blame to the person in charge. That experience can have a wider focus. At any point in history, we can find chaos. Injustice, violence, and evil can be found in every era. An honest look at the world can lead us to ask, "Who's in charge here?" especially when we ourselves are the ones experiencing injustice, violence, and evil. We honestly wonder whether a good God is genuinely in charge. If the world is a mess, God would appear to be at fault. That issue is at the center of today's text. Peter had confessed Jesus to be "the Christ" (Mark 8:29), God's promised king who would overthrow evil and establish a kingdom of justice and peace. Peter was right in his confession: Jesus is indeed the Christ (Messiah). But the disciples' expectation about God's king and his kingdom needed some modifying. The king would establish God's kingdom of justice and peace, but not in the way they anticipated.

Lesson Background

Today's text is part of a long discourse that Jesus gave to his disciples in the week leading up to his crucifixion and resurrection. In the days preceding, Jesus was acclaimed by the crowds as God's king (Mark 11:9, 10). He took action against those doing business in the temple courts (11:15–19). And he gave a vivid picture of the religious leaders' rejection of him and of the judgment that God would bring on them in response (12:1–12). In this setting, Jesus told his disciples that they could expect the magnificent temple structure to be destroyed (Mark 13:2). Expecting that Jesus was about to assert himself as God's king, the disciples likely believed that the destruction of the temple would mean that God would immediately replace it with a greater temple that would fulfill his promises (Isaiah 56:7). Surely the destruction of the temple must mean that God's glorious reign was about to be revealed in full! But instead of speaking about glory, Jesus warned about difficulty and hardship. In the paragraphs just preceding today's text, Jesus cautioned his disciples to expect more of what they had experienced in the past: wars, earthquakes, famines, and persecution (Mark 13:3–13). Yet in the midst of all that, they could remain confident that God would be with them and would be victorious (13:26, 27). (Parallels to today's text are Matthew 24:15–31; Luke 21:20–28.)

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

It has been said that the theme of the Old Testament is that Christ is coming, the theme of the four Gospels is that Christ has come, and the theme of the rest of the New Testament is that Christ is coming again. There is basic truth in the approach. Discussions concerning the Second Coming always elicit significant debate among those who profess to believe the Bible to be God's Word. Sadly, more fire than light is often generated! Even so, those who accept the divine origin of the Scriptures do not always agree about the details of end-times events. Since these things have not yet occurred, we must be cautious about being too dogmatic concerning our preferred understanding of the last days. Two extremes must be avoided. First,

some find that the study of last things, or eschatology, should be avoided because of the controversial nature and the uncertainty of the topic. Second, some develop tunnel vision regarding prophecy and fail to study anything else, thus avoiding study of other important Bible doctrines. Most Christians have heard that Jesus is coming again at some time. But not too many people seem really concerned about preparing for this wonderful event. The Bible leaves no doubt about some of the signs that will come before He shows up; so we are without excuse if we are not prepared. There are many people around us who have had something to say about when Jesus is coming. Many false prophets have even set dates for when He is coming. It is important that we take Christ's coming seriously, but we must not get caught up in wild theories that do not have scriptural support. For us as Christians, the second coming should not be a topic of fear but rather one of rejoicing because our "redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). He has already given us clear instructions in His Word that tell us what to look for. Christians are encouraged in the Bible to be ready. Our lesson this week prepares us to be ready.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Warnings Before Jesus' Coming (Mark 13:14-20)

14 "So when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (let the reader understand), "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
15 Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house.
16 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.
17 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!
18 And pray that your flight may not be in winter.
19 For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.
20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

Abomination of desolation (14)

The desecration of a wing in the temple in Jerusalem (Dan 9:25-27)

25 "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

When Jerusalem is surrounded by armies (Luke 21:20)

20 "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.

A time period after the daily sacrifices were abolished (Daniel 12:8-12)

8 I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" 9 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. 11 "From the

time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

When the temple fortress is desecrated (Daniel 11:30-31)

30 Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.

Unexpected (15-18)

Unexpected so be ready (Matt 24:44)

44 So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

Unexpected so keep watch (Matt 25:13)

13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

Unexpected because no one knows the day or hour (Matt 24:36)

36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Unexpected because it will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess 5:1-2)

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

Tribulations (19-20)

Tribulations because man's days are full of trouble (Job 14:1)

14 "Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Tribulations because of being a follower of Jesus (Matt 10:22)

22 All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

Tribulations because in this world we will have trouble (John 16:33)

33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Tribulations because through them we will learn perseverance (James 1:2-4)

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Tribulations because Jesus prophesied it (1 Peter 1:6)

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

Signs of Jesus' Coming (Mark 13:21-25)

21 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'Look, He is there!' do not believe it.
22 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.
23 But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.
24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light;
25 the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

False Christ (21-23)

Whose reasons depend on human traditions and worldly principles (Col 2:8)

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Who are deceivers (2 Thess 2:3)

3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

Who are false prophets (1 John 4:1)

1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Who perform deceptive signs and miracles (Mark 13:22)

22 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect-- if that were possible.

Who are liars and deny Jesus as the Christ (1 John 2:18, 22)

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 22 Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist-- he denies the Father and the Son.

Who do not acknowledge that Jesus is God (1 John 4:3)

3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

Cosmic disturbances (24-25)

The heavens will be destroyed by fire (2 Pet 3:10-14)

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

Cosmic disturbances that provide the signs of the beginnings of the end (Matt 24:6-8)

6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

Cosmic disturbances that will cause the shaking of the universe (Luke 21:25-26)

25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

Cosmic disturbances where the heavens will vanish (Isa 51:6)

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

Cosmic disturbances where the sky will flee from God's presence (Rev 20:11)

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.

Cosmic disturbances because the heavens are reserved for fire (2 Peter 3:7)

7 By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

Reality of Jesus' Coming (Mark 13:26-27)

26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

Full of glory (26)

Full of glory, and Jesus will bring 'rewards' with Him (Matt 16:27)

27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

Full of glory and afterwards Jesus will sit on His throne (Matt 25:31)

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

Full of glory and Jesus will come with all the angels (Mark 8:38)

38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Full of glory so that He can glorify His people (2 Thess 1:10)

10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

For the gathering of His saints (27)

To bring together His Flock (John 10:16)

16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.

To fulfill the hope of resurrection (1Thess 4:13-15)

13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

Gathering of the dead in Christ (1 Thess 4:16)

16 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.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Centuries of history give us certain advantages over Jesus' disciples. As we read his words, we know how accurately he spoke. Wars, famines, and earthquakes have continued in every era. False Messiahs try to turn believers from their faith. Jerusalem indeed was destroyed by the Romans. Jesus was right about all of that. But just like Jesus' disciples, we daily confront a world filled with evil. We find ourselves victims of that evil. We are tempted to give in to despair. Like the disciples, we need the assurance that God does not abandon his people. Whatever trouble we face, we are not forsaken. The Lord can deliver us just as he did them. And when he returns, he returns for us. He will reign supreme, and his people will be the beneficiaries.

Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

The event alluded to by Jesus in our text for this week has a long history of anticipation attached to it. Its first appearance in the text of the holy Scriptures occurs in the prophecy of Daniel. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14). The picture here is one of coronation, the passing of royal succession from royal Father to royal Son. A news commentator might intone, "This is the moment we have all been waiting for!" Jesus, who died for the salvation of sinners, has been summoned by God the Father to receive the scepter of His kingdom. As Daniel's prophecy tells us, this Ruler's kingdom will be unlike any other kingdom the world has ever known. First, when Jesus' kingdom is fully manifested, it shall be absolutely universal. As His often remembered title states, He will be seen to be King of kings and Lord of lords. No matter how great the power and sway of any earthly ruler, Jesus' authority shall overrule it without exception. Jesus' kingdom shall also be universal in that it shall forever encompass all the nations of the earth. Every race, every language, every culture, every tribe, and every family shall forever be under His sovereign authority. Second, Jesus' kingdom is an everlasting one. Unlike the great nations and empires of earthly history—which rise and fall; which are built up in one age and razed in the next; which gain fame and renown at first and then wane into oblivion as time inexorably passes over them—His kingdom is ever gaining in power and might. No human boundary shall mark its limits and no stronghold of hell shall be able to resist its advance until from east to west, north to south, all the heavens and earth shall have become the everlasting realm of the Saviour. Jesus' everlasting kingdom shall be absolutely impervious to both rebellion from within and invasion from without. Though the fury of the deepest pits of hell be unleashed to besiege it all around, the glory of God shall assure the kingdom's peace and safety, and the almighty arm of God will assure its victory over every foe. Later in Mark's Gospel, as the Lord Jesus stood trial, the high priest abjured Him repeatedly to answer whether or not He was the Son of God. Jesus answered him fearlessly, once again applying Daniel's prophecy to Himself. "I am," said Jesus. "And ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the

clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62). As Hebrews encourages us, "Wherefore we [are] receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (12:28-29).

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. God's people are not exempt from suffering and tribulation (Mark 13:14-16; cf. 2 Tim. 3:12)
2. A time of great tribulation is coming to the earth (Mark 13:17-19)
3. God's grace toward His children is evident even in the midst of tribulation (vs. 20)
4. Beware—false christs are even now trying to deter us from following the real Christ (Mark 13:21-23; cf. 1 John 2:18)
5. Count on the fact that Jesus is coming again to rule and reign in power and glory (Mark 13:24-26)
6. When Jesus comes again, He will finally unite all His children from all the ages (vs. 27)

Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

"A gentleman went away from home and secured a good position. He loved his family. He sent money for every need as well as many gifts. But the wife and children grew more anxious, as the days went by, to see their husband and father. Finally when they could stand it no longer they wrote him and said, 'Please do not send any more gifts or money. We want you'" (www.elbourne.org). The coming of the Son of man is all about Him, not us. So many times people talk about how much they want the Lord to return, but their words lack a proper balance. They seem to want the Lord to return only so that they can be removed from this sin-cursed earth and all its damage and disease. This is not a wrong motivation, but believers talk too little about wanting the Lord to come back so that they can enjoy His presence. Like the family in our illustration, let us say, "Lord, come quickly; we want You!"

A period of affliction (Mark 13:14-23)

Jesus began His discourse on a future period of affliction with a reference to a specific Old Testament prophecy. He said that when Daniel's prophecy regarding the abomination of desolation was fulfilled, human beings were to flee for their very lives to protective places. They were to waste no time returning to their homes and longing for personal possessions. Pregnant women and mothers would be particularly vulnerable, and the time of year would be a significant factor in the degree of distress. This period of affliction would be unlike any other time in the history of the world. Unless the Lord shortened the time for the sake of His special remnant, everyone living would perish. Moreover, the deceptive acts that evil powers would perform would be so captivating and impressive that even God's special remnant would have a difficult time rejecting them. It has often been said that things have to get worse before they get better. That is certainly true with respect to the coming of the Son of man. Differing opinions exist about the timing of this magnificent event; however, one thing can be universally agreed upon by believers—Jesus loves us enough to have given us His truthful and gracious warning. Let us take heed and live circumspectly to His honor and glory!

A glorious arrival (Mark 13:24-27)

After a period of great tribulation, the sun and the moon will be darkened, stars will fall, and the heavens will be shaken. But on the heels of those phenomena, humanity will see an even greater spiritual one—the coming of the Son of man in power and glory. Angels will accompany Christ's return and assist the Lord of power and glory in gathering His special remnant from the uttermost parts of the world, bringing them into His glorious presence. The coming of the Son of man is an extraordinary future event that fills the believer with hope and purpose. Our hope is that this world is not the ultimate focus of our existence. Believers can endure this present world as spiritual pilgrims, knowing that Jesus has gone to prepare an eternal place for us and that He will come again to gather us together to be with Him (cf. John 14:1-3). The believer can awaken each morning with the faith that all his life's activities have meaning in the light of eternity. Knowing that this life is a training ground for his eternal heavenly existence with Christ, the believer presses on with purpose and dignity.

