

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

MARK 13:24–27

Introduction

The greatest event yet to happen in the history of the world will be the return of Jesus Christ. The disciples wanted to know, “When will these things happen?” (Mark 13:4), and “What will be the sign of your coming?” (Mat 24:3). Jesus began to answer the second question about His return in this passage.

- I. The setting: after the distress or tribulation (v. 24).
- II. Event 1: there will be astronomical happenings (vv. 24-25).
- III. Event 2: there will be the return of the Son of Man in the clouds (v. 26).
- IV. Event 3: there will be the gathering of the elect (v. 27).

I. *Mark 13:24 The Return of Jesus Christ*

When will Jesus return? “Following that distress [tribulation]” (Mat 24:29-31). The disciples had asked two questions (Mark 13:4; see Mat 24:4).

1. When would the temple be destroyed?
2. What are the signs of the Lord’s coming and of the end of the age?

Jesus was now dealing with His coming again (v. 26); He was answering the disciples’ questions. He revealed exactly when He was going to return. He will return “in those days, following that distress [tribulation].” The idea is immediately after the great distress [tribulation]. In fact, Mathew uses the word *immediately* (24:29). Jesus even said that the days of the great tribulation have to be shortened in order to save mankind (Mark 13:20). Apparently, it will be shortened by Jesus’ return. Note a significant point.

Jesus did not return “following that distress [tribulation]” of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. (Mat 24:29-31.) This is clearly evident as we stand here centuries later. Therefore, what Jesus says in this passage is bound to refer to His coming again. This also indicates that the distress or tribulation just discussed will be the great distress [tribulation] lying out in the future. Jesus will return...

- “in those days, following that distress [tribulation]” (Mark 13:24).
- “immediately following the distress [tribulation] of those days” (Mat 24:29).

Both the great distress or tribulation and the Lord’s return will be tied together. The Lord’s return will follow immediately upon the heels of the great distress or tribulation. It is “in those days, following that distress,” that He will return.

It must be remembered that the terrible afflictions predicted by our Lord referred both to Jerusalem’s fall in A.D. 70 and to the great tribulation “unequaled from the beginning, when God created the world” (Mark 13:19; see Mat 24:21). The fact that Jesus said He would return “in those days, following that distress” tells us there are some terrible

days of suffering and trouble coming upon the earth. But His return also tells us some glorious news.

1. He is definitely God. He is omniscient. He knows the future of the earth (evidenced by Jerusalem's destruction about forty years after His death, and the great trial yet to come upon the earth).
2. He is in control. He will return to shorten the day of trial and redeem mankind and the world. There will be an end to all trials (Mark 13:20).

II. Mark 13:24–25 Astronomical Signs of the End Times and the Return of Jesus Christ

The first event when Jesus returns will be astronomical happenings. The language is very descriptive.

- => “The sun will be darkened.”
- => “The moon will not give its light.”
- => “The stars will fall from the sky.”
- => “The heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

Very practically, such astronomical happenings occur now. The earth is sometimes darkened by dust from earthly catastrophes such as volcanic eruptions, wind storms, and smoke from huge fires. Of course, whatever darkens the sun hides the light of the moon from earth. The stars, that is, meteorites of varying sizes, fall throughout space often. “The heavenly bodies” being shaken could be the heavenly bodies outside our solar system that are called by the Bible “the heavenly array” (Deut 4:19).

Something should be mentioned here about the power of the atom. Of course, an atom bomb exploding on earth is powerful enough to darken the sun and moon from earth's view. Worldwide atomic warfare would cause so much dust and pollution it would be difficult for any man to see anything in outer space. But as the atom is known today, it could not affect the axis or rotation (the falling or shaking) of the sun and moon and stars unless there is to be an inter-galactic war of some sort way out in the future. Of course, there is always the possibility that there is a power much greater than what we know today. This is not to say that atomic warfare will never happen. There will be wars and rumours of war as long as the earth stands. But what the Bible teaches is that God is going to end all things, not man. When the world ends, it will be God's ending it by His own will and act and power.

An extreme literalism needs to be avoided when interpreting these verses, for there is just so much we do not know about the laws (powers) of nature and the forces God has put in motion throughout the universe. However, there is no reason for not understanding the Lord's words as actual or literal events.

What the present passage seems to mean is that the whole universe is going to be affected by Jesus' coming to earth. The sun and moon and the stars and powers (laws) of heaven will be affected in the sense that they *will open up and receive Him*. They will serve notice that this is the Creator, the Son of Man, God's very own Son, who is now coming to earth in great power and glory. Imagine a spectacular fireworks display, and perhaps it will give us a little glimpse of what Christ is saying. A simple question is: Why would not everything, including the heavenly bodies, put on a display (that would be terrifying to man) when its Creator, the Son of God, returns?

Note in the verses below that the astronomical bodies are affected because of *the evil of men and the wrath of God* that is being shown. That is, the scene of falling stars (meteorites) is not for the purpose of man's witnessing a spectacular event; it is to point to the Son of God, to His judgement's falling upon the earth. Every man is going to know beyond any doubt that Jesus is coming in all the power and the glory of God Himself. As Jesus said, "with great power and glory" He is coming. He is coming that "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:10-11).

The words "great power and glory" indicate that He is coming to subject all men to His rule and reign and to execute judgment upon the earth. Scripture definitely reveals that astronomical happenings will precede and accompany the coming of the Lord.

Isa 13:10-13 *The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make man scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the Lord Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.*

Isa 24:17-22 *Terror and pit and snare await you, O people of the earth. Whoever flees at the sound of terror will fall into a pit; whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in a snare. The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls — never to rise again. In that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days.*

Joel 2:30-31 *I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

Joel 3:15-16 *The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem; the earth and the sky will tremble. But the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.*

Mark 13:24-25 *“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.’ ”*

Luke 17:29-30 *But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.”*

Luke 21:25-26 *“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. Men will faint from terror; apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”*

Acts 2:19-20 *I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.*

Rev 6:12-17 *I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”*

Note the exact words of the verses of Revelation above since they are referring to the same event as Jesus (v. 30; see Rev. 6:17). The coining of Christ will trigger a great earthquake on earth and astronomical happenings in the heavens above (vv. 12-14). Men, great and small, will be terrified and hide themselves (v. 15) and cry for immediate death instead of having to face Jesus (v. 16). Why? Because they will know something: “The great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?” (v. 17).

The disciples had asked, “What will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?” Jesus is answering them: terrifying astronomical happenings will be a sign.

III. Mark 13: 26 The Actual Return of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man

The second event is the actual return of Jesus, the Son of Man Himself. Note three significant points.

1. It is the Son of Man who comes. Jesus claimed that He is the Son of Man, the Son of God incarnate in human flesh as the Perfect Man (See *Jesus, the Son of Man*, Mat

8:20). In that day, there will be no doubt about who He is (see Mark 14:61-62). Right now, He is recognized only by believers, but then it will be unmistakable: He is the Son of Man.

2. All men and every eye shall see Him return. This is what is meant by “they.” Mathew actually says, “All the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming” (Mat 24:30). His return will be visible to every man on earth, and every man shall then acknowledge Him to be Lord, God’s very own Son (Phil 2:9-11; see Rev 1:7).
3. He is coming “in the clouds with great power and glory.” Picture the scene: the backdrop of heaven is pitch dark, without any major light from the sun and moon. And then, suddenly, as quickly as the flash of lightning, the most brilliant focus of light ever known to man appears. The Shekinah glory of God shines in the person of Jesus Christ as He appears to the world. The Son of Man is there, in the clouds, having returned in great power and glory just as He said He would.

Acts 1:11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

2 Th 1:7-10 And give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marvelled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

2 Th 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.

Rev 1:7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

Rev 19:11-16 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but He himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron sceptre.” He treads the wine-press of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

MATHEW 08:20 JESUS, THE SON OF MAN

*Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." **Mathew 08:20***

Jesus is not only what an ordinary man is, a son of man; Jesus is what every man ought to be, the Son of Man Himself. He is the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Perfect Man, the Pattern, the Embodiment of everything a man ought to be. Jesus Christ is the perfect picture of a man. Everything God wants a man to be is seen perfectly in Jesus Christ (see John 1:14; Col 2:9-10; Heb 1:3.)

The title also means the Ideal Servant of man. It stresses His sympathy for the poor, the broken-hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised, the outcasts, the bereaved (see Luke 4:18). Jesus is the Pattern, the Model, the Perfect Example of concern and caring. He served and set a perfect example of how every man ought to serve other men.

Jesus calls Himself "the Son of Man" about eighty times. It is His favourite term. The title 'Son of Man' is probably based upon the Son of Man in Daniel (Dan 7:13-14). Scripture also gives a picture of Jesus as the heavenly Son of Man contrasted with Adam as the earthly Man (1 Cor 15:45-47). Each serves as a Representative Man for the human race in God's plan for world history.

***Mat 9:6** "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home."*

***Mat 16:13,16** When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

***Mat 20:28** "Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

***Mark 8:38** "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."*

***Luke 19:10** "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

***John 5:26-27** "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man."*

***John 13:31-32** When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once."*

Acts 7:56 “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Rev 1:12-13 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lamp stands, and among the lamp stands was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. □

IV. Mark 13:27 The Gathering of the Elect

The third event when Jesus returns is the gathering of the elect. There are two significant points made in this verse.

1. The angels of God “gather His elect.” Who are the elect?
=> They are the people who cry (pray, converse, share) day and night unto God (Luke 18:7).
=> They are the people who are justified by God (Rom 8:33).
=> They are the people who are “holy and dearly loved, [who] clothe [themselves] with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Col 3:12).
2. The elect are gathered from all over the earth. They shall be gathered from the most remote spot on earth and carried to “*the ends of the heavens.*”

Mat 25:31-32 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” ■