

2026-08-09

See the Son of Man Coming

Mark 13:24-27

Language is very interesting. Every culture uses words to express themselves sometimes literally and sometimes figuratively. If I said, “Come on, spill the tea!” Am I asking you to pour tea out of a glass or cup onto the ground or floor? No, what am I saying? How about if I used the phrase, “spill the beans.” Do you know now? Sure, I am asking for the latest scoop, I am asking for the best information you know. How about if I said, “He will be OK after he blows off some steam.” Blowing off steam is not literally letting all the steam out of our body. It is letting all the stress or anger or excess energy out. **If a young person came up to you** and said that your shoes or clothes were “dripping,” what do they mean? That you have been in the Arizona heat too long and your shoes or clothes are melting? No, they mean your shoes and clothes are stylish. Sometimes words or phrases can mean one thing in a language and a totally different thing in another language. The word ‘Ma’ in English refers to a mother. The word ‘Ma’ in Chinese refers to a horse. Generally, in our American culture a dragon is evil. In Chinese culture dragons are good luck.

When we look at languages across cultures and also across time or history, in this case thousands of years, we need to be careful that we understand what is being said correctly. Jesus has been answering the 2 questions the disciples asked Him in Mark 13:4 about the destruction of the temple. *“Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?”* Jesus told them the sign to watch for, the *“abomination of desolation.”* The disciples who were still alive witnessed the total and complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. No doubt that Jews and Christians were shocked that it happened. Jesus began His answer with **“Take heed that no one deceives you”** (13:5). He finished His answer to the disciples with **“Take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand”** (13:23). Even though Jesus has finished answering the disciples’ questions, He is still going to talk, but in these next few verses Jesus is not talking directly to the disciples. He said in verse 26, *“Then **they** will see.”* Jesus is talking about a future event that other people will witness, not the disciples in their lifetime. Look at what Jesus said.

Mark 13:24-25 *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.”* How are we to understand these verses? How long is there *“after that tribulation”* in A.D. 70? Are these descriptions to be understood literally as some preachers preach or are they to be understood figuratively? Hopefully you have heard that it is best to use the Bible to help us understand the

Bible. In other words, have any other prophets said things like this before and what did they mean when they spoke them. We find that the prophet **Isaiah** declared, *“For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine”* (13:10). With these words along with many others Isaiah declared the coming destruction of Babylon. The Medes brought about the total destruction of Babylon over 2,500 years ago fulfilling this prophecy as well as the whole chapter of Isaiah 13.

Then there is the prophet, **Ezekiel**. He declared *“When I put out your light, I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light”* (32:7). In this prophecy Ezekiel proclaimed that God would bring destruction to Egypt and the end of that Pharaoh and God did it. Then there is the prophet, **Amos**. He declared, *“‘And it shall come to pass in that day,’ says the Lord God, ‘that I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight’”* (8:9). Again, these words along with many others in context explain how God dramatically intervened in this world to bring about the destruction of Samaria in 722 B.C.

Then, in the New Testament, Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32. Peter used these verses to explain the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. He said, *“But **this** is what was spoken by the prophet Joel”* (Acts 2:16). *“This”* referring to the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in other languages (2:4). In that prophecy are the words, *“I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness. And the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord”* (2:19-20). Peter used this prophecy and many others in his sermon to convince the Jews in the temple in Jerusalem that Jesus is the Messiah. He died for our sins. God raised Him up. *“Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear”* (Acts 2:33). Did these signs and wonders in the heavens happen literally in any and all of these events? No, they happened figuratively.

What is Jesus telling us in these verses in Mark 13:24-25? He is telling us that sometime after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, God will bring about another dramatic act in our world. There is a pattern with this language. What have these past events been? They have all been about God bringing judgment upon a people, even His own people who have refused to repent from their sins and faithfully follow their God and His design for their life. Even the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was about judgment. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, *“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”*

(John 16:8). Right now, the Holy Spirit is working on an individual basis, on each person to convict them of their sin and need of God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ. God wants people to wake-up to their coming judgment and receive His offer of forgiveness if they will listen. Often times in prophesy, when God uses figurative language, He also includes language that is to be understood literally.

What follows the figurative language in Mark 13:24-25 is the literal language of Mark 13:26. *"Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."* Jesus will literally return to this earth. When Jesus comes back, He will not return like He came the first time. He will not be born, raised and walking this earth to call people to repentance. He has already done that. When Jesus returns, He is coming for judgment. He is coming in the sky with the clouds. He will come as a bolt of lightning comes flashing across the sky, unexpected and quick (Matthew 24:27). **Christians** will be thrilled to see their Savior. The joy of believing the truth will overwhelm us. We are looking forward to this wonderful day. I hope and expect Jesus to return in my lifetime. It could be 2,000 years from now, but I highly doubt that. Paul expected Jesus to return in His lifetime (1 Thessalonians 4:17). But it did not happen. Now it is 2,000 years later and we are still waiting. Do not be discouraged. Jesus will keep His promise. People who are not followers of Jesus Christ will not be thrilled at the appearance of Jesus. They will mourn because judgment has come and they still refuse to repent (Revelation 9:20-21).

Verse 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."* Matthew records that there will be *"a great sound of a trumpet"* (24:31). Paul writes that *"the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16). When Paul writes to the Corinthians, he called it *"the last trumpet"* (1 Corinthians 15:52). When Jesus returns, He will send His angels to gather His chosen ones, the elect to join Him. With a short statement like this, more questions arise in our minds that are not answered. When Jesus gathers His elect, His chosen ones, where will we be gathered to? The easy answer is, wherever Jesus is.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord"* (4:16-17). We are to encourage each other with these words. No matter how far away we are from the actual event, the angels of God will come for us and bring us into the presence of Jesus. We will not hangout in the clouds with

Jesus forever. Some believe we will go with Jesus to heaven and return to earth with Him when He comes to reign. Others believe Jesus returns to earth immediately after we are gathered together with Him in the clouds.

Whatever happens next, whatever place we go to, we go with Jesus. At this point, wherever He leads we will go. Of course, whenever we talk about the return of Jesus and our being with Him, in every generation, we want to know **when will this happen?** We all want it to happen now. God wants us to be patient. Remember, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness.”* God is not slow. God is always right on time. God has a plan. His ways are not our ways. God is longsuffering to people. He wants to give everyone every opportunity available to them to repent even if it means more suffering in the world. He is not willing that any should perish. He would rather see all people come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

We are told that the day the Lord comes back to this earth, it will be like a thief that comes in the night (3:10). What are we to do until Jesus returns? 1) **Share the gospel.** Jesus told us that *“the gospel must first be preached to all the nations”* before His return (Mark 13:10). 2) **Keep believing** in Jesus and trusting His word. We are not to be deceived. We are to endure to the end. *“He who endures to the end shall be saved”* (13:13). Enduring is not just tolerating things in this life. It is living godly, doing the right things, showing compassion and helping people in need. It is encouraging other believers to walk in the Spirit and glorify God. 3) **Make disciples.** The great commission is still our calling. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have command you”* (Matthew 28:19-20). Yes, there will be increasing opposition and hatred towards Christians, but always remember, God is with us. He will give us the words to say. He loves us and will never forsake us. Be faithful to Him.

Questions to ask yourself: Do I believe that Jesus has forgiven me? Do I believe that He died in my place for my sins? Have I turned away from my sinful lifestyle? Do I know and am I following the teachings of Jesus?

Actions to take: Know the gospel. Share the gospel. Resolve to believe and trust Jesus. Let His Spirit of compassion guide you daily. Teach others what you know.

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