

**The Final Generation, Part 2**

Scripture: Mark 13:28-37

Code: 41-70

We are looking at Mark chapter 13 and verses 28 through 37. I know most of you have been with us, but for those who have not, this setting is a very important setting. This message given by our Lord is His own message on His Second Coming. This is our Lord's description of the events that lead up to His return. The Scripture says Christ is coming back to judge the ungodly, 2 Thessalonians 1, He is coming back to judge the ungodly. Revelation 19 says the same thing, He is coming back in judgment, crushing devastating judgment on all the ungodly. They will be slain by sword that comes out of His mouth, that is His Word. He will literally speak their death and they will go forever into the Lake of Fire.

He also will establish His earthly Kingdom to fulfill all the promises made both in the Old and the New Testament of His reign on the earth with the saints. That is the great event that culminates human history.

Our Lord had spoken about it to His disciples. The Old Testament prophets had spoken of it. And so they had expectation when on Tuesday of Passion Week, Jesus attacked the temple. The disciples must have known that they were seeing things they didn't expect. On Monday was the triumphal entry, they hailed Him as the Messiah, superficially, but nonetheless. On Tuesday He attacks the Jews and not the Romans and He speaks about His death and even tells a parable on Wednesday about the fact that He is going to be killed. That's not the first time He said that. He had said that on at least three occasions that are recorded in the gospels.

So the disciples knew He was going to die and rise again. They were having a hard time buying into that and believing that. But our Lord gave them details about His arrest, His treatment, His death and that three days later He would rise again.

Their holding on to hope. What is the future going to be? Will the Kingdom come? This death business is in a severe intrusion into their well-crafted eschatology. Messiah comes and reigns and establishes His Kingdom and from His throne in Jerusalem, rules the world with peace and righteousness. That was their eschatology. This death element they never really grasped.

And so, in processing that, our Lord attempts to comfort them and does to all subsequent generations by explaining to them that the Kingdom will come because the King will return. He will die, He will rise, but He will return again to establish His Kingdom. So the intent of this passage is both warning to

the world of His return and comfort to believers of the coming of the Kingdom.

He describes in this chapter, chapter 13 of Mark, what history is going to be like. And He described it verses 5 through 13. It will be characterized by grave difficulty, worsening conditions. There will be religious deception. There will be disasters brought about because nations will make war with each other. And there will be natural disasters that are destructive. In fact, they will destroy millions upon millions of lives. And then there will be persecution against true believers through all of this period of history, until the Lord returns.

Then He describes, as we remember, in verses 14 to 23, the last seven years of history. And that's when everything that characterized the previous years, the war, the devastation, the disasters, the false religion and the persecution reaches epoch levels, never before seen. That's what verse 19 says, a time of Tribulation like the world has never seen and never will..

So there's a description of human history that ends in a seven-year period that we've been talking about called the Tribulation, the last half of it called the Great Tribulation. After that, verse 24 says, "The sun is darkened, the moon doesn't light because it draws its light from the sun. The stars fall out of heaven. The bodies in orbit are shaken out of their normal orbit. The universe goes black and then comes the Son of Man in power and great glory in the clouds." That is the Second Coming.

He will then establish His Kingdom by gathering all His elect from everywhere in the world and even from heaven, from the farthest corner of the earth to the farthest end of heaven. And they will all enjoy the fullness of His Kingdom.

That leads us up to our text in verse 28. This is the portion of our Lord's teaching that gives us the implications and the application of this truth. It starts with a parable. Let's go back to that parable, for a moment, we'll call it the analogy. "Learn the parable from the fig tree." Luke says, "From all the trees, any tree will teach you this." "When its branch has already become tender and put forth its leaves, you know that summer is near." We know that, we're there, aren't we right now? We're in April of the year, this would be the same time as our Lord was in at the Passover, so we're studying this at exactly the same calendar time. And we know that when the trees begin to put forth their sap and the leaves appear, that summer is near. That is a very simple analogy. We all understand it.

It is followed by an application in verse 29, "Even so, you too when you see these things happening, recognize that He is near, right at the door." Who is you. You is that group of people who are alive when these things begin to happen. What are these things? The things just described in the time of the Tribulation. They are described in some general terms, in verses 14 to 23. And as I pointed out, in specific terms in Revelation 6 through 19. When you see these things happen, including the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION mentioned in verse 14, where the Antichrist sets up his authority in the temple, and all the things occur at that time, when you see these things happening, recognize

He is near, right at the door. The Lord is going to come immediately after that time of Tribulation. That's what verse 24 just said.

So verse 30 then says, "Truly I say to you," just to reemphasize it, "Truly I say to you, this generation," that is the generation of people who see the signs, who see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, that generation will not pass away until all these things take place. That is, when the abomination comes, the generation alive at that time will see the return of Christ. The simple analogy then, and a specific application. And we went through all of that in detail. So this is a message from our Lord for that generation in the future that is alive.

Sometimes people, as we saw this morning, ask the question, "Where's the Rapture of the church?" We talked about the Rapture, didn't we, this morning in detail. The Rapture of the church isn't in this passage. Why isn't it in this passage? Because the Rapture isn't for that generation. You understand that? The Rapture of the church is not for the generation that is going to see the signs. Why? If the Rapture of the church was intended for the generation that sees the signs, then there would be an explanation of the Rapture. But since the Rapture is not intended for the generation that sees the signs, it isn't mentioned here. Okay? The Rapture is intended for the church. The Rapture will have already occurred, that's its distinctiveness.

So, we want to move to a third point for tonight, okay? The authority...the authority, this message comes with authority. We need to hear it with authority and we need to believe it because it comes with authority and we need to communicate it with authority.

Verse 31, here's the authority. "Heaven and earth will pass away." Wow, let's just stop there for a minute. "Heaven and earth will pass away." This is not a permanent planet, it is a temporary planet. Frankly, it has a very short life.

You say, "Well, isn't the earth billions of years old?" No, that's the lie of evolution. The earth is something close to six thousand years old and we don't know how much longer it will exist, but we have every reason to believe, not long, certainly not tens of thousands, and millions and billions of years. Heaven and earth will pass away.

Heaven and earth as we know it will pass away. That is absolutely true. This universe will be devastated in judgment. I read those judgments to you last Sunday, from Revelation 6 through 19, we saw them, the sealed judgments. Every time a seal is broken in the imagery of Revelation, something else happens. Until you get to the seventh seal and when the seventh seal is broken by our Lord who has the sealed document is the Title Deed to the earth, and as He breaks the final seal and takes the title of the earth out of that seventh seal comes seven trumpets and each blast of each trumpet by an angel signals a massive judgment on the earth, a holocaust of epoch unparalleled proportions. And out of the trumpet, the last trumpet comes seven bowls, great blot bowls, as if casting some kind of

liquid like a judgment, literally dousing the planet and they are rapid fire at the very end and they are horrific judgments that even exceed the trumpet judgments. The earth will be devastated. The planets, the stars, the heavenly bodies completely disoriented and everything that we know in this world that is stable will become shaken. Heaven and earth will pass away.

This, by the way, is not the first time our Lord has said that. He said it at the beginning of His ministry in Galilee in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:18, "Truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." Heaven and earth will pass away, but they will not pass away until everything stated in Scripture is accomplished.

Heaven and earth will pass away, what will that be like? The description of that event is in 2 Peter chapter 3, you want to go there. Heaven and earth will pass away, and Peter gives us by the Holy Spirit the revelation that helps us understand that. There are those people who are uniformitarians who think that everything is going to continue the way it is. Verse 3, "There are in the last days mockers, come with their mocking, following after their own lusts and they say, 'Where's the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, everything continues just as it was in the beginning of creation.'" They believe in uniformity, they believe in the evolutionary process that just kind of works its way out. They maintain this, however, because it escapes their notice that "By the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water." This is a reference to the cataclysm of creation through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. "But by His Word, the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire." In other words, they forget the cataclysm of creation and they forget the cataclysmic flood which has literally inundated the world in Noah's day and left evidences of itself all through the planet to be found everywhere, even in deserts.

They forget the cataclysm creation was and the cataclysm of the universal flood. By His Word, the present heavens and earth are being reserved not for water, this time, because water was a huge factor in the creation, and of course in the flood, but this time for fire, kept for the day of judgment and ungodly men. You remember when the Lord destroyed the world with water, He said He'd never do that again? That's a rainbow promise. God would never destroy the world by water again. He will destroy the world. He will destroy not only the earth but the heavens and the earth, but not by water but by fire...but by fire. That is the promise of the Lord.

I want you to notice verse 7, "By His Word." He created by His Word, right? He spoke the world into existence. "Let there be light." He created it by His Word and He will destroy it by His Word. If you go back to the flood account in Genesis 6 and 7, you can see that God literally spoke the flood judgment. And right now, the present heavens and earth are literally being reserved for fire. The verb could be translated "they're kept in store." They're held together for a final fiery judgment. A day of judgment and a day of destruction, Jude 15 says, of ungodly men.

If you know anything about...and we're learning more all the time since the reactors in Japan have been struck by the earthquake and the flood, if you know anything about atomic energy, you know that it is literally, potentially devastating power that can be harnessed for good. But if it's out of control, it can destroy. We know that from the atomic bomb, nuclear power is deadly. The entire universe, all matter, is a kicking bomb, all of it. All atomic energy is held together by the Lord. Now it is reserved, it is kept in store for a final fire. And verse 10 describes it. "The day of the Lord will come like a thief, unexpected, unannounced, no man knows the day or the hour, right?" We're going to go back to that verse. We know the season, we know the time, we know the year, but we don't know the day, don't know the hour. The day of the Lord is a technical term describing the final judgment of God. That term is used in the Old Testament to refer to other judgments. But this is the final one. It will come like a thief comes. A thief doesn't announce his arrival. A thief comes unexpectedly, startlingly and the heavens will pass away with a roar. And the elements will be destroyed with immense heat. And the earth and its works will be burned up. The heavens will cease to exist.

Everything that constitutes the bodies in the heavens will go out of existence with a roar. This is an interesting word in the Greek, *rhoizedon*, it's onomatopoeic. You know what an onomatopoeic word is, it's a word that means like it sounds, or sounds like it means. It's like whizz, he ran in a whizz. We mean he ran fast, but whizz is onomatopoeic in that it describes the actual action...*rhoizedon*, kind of a crackling sound, whizzing sound, produced by rapid motion through the air. It was used of any kind of shrill, rushing sound, even used of the hissing of snakes, or the whirring of bird wings, or the swish of an arrow, any kind of rushing movement that had an accompanying roar or crash. This is the roar of nuclear implosion.

The elements, the *stoicheion*, literally the things lined up in a row, the atomic structure, the physical elements, the atomic particles, the basic structure of the universe will melt, destroyed by immense heat. Literally the idea here is that its components will be manifest, the earth and its works, its components will be consumed. This is a final uncreation.

Verse 11 then says, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of person, or people, ought you to be?" All these things being destroyed, the Greek verb for destroy is *luo*, it's kind of the model exemplary Greek verb used in most Greek classes because it has more universal consistent principle parts than any other verb. We become familiar with it. It really means to loose, *luo* means to loose. Everything is going to be let loose, the breakup of the atoms of the universe.

The heavens, verse 12, will be destroyed by burning. And the elements again in verse 12 will melt with fervent heat. What's going to happen after that? Verse 13, "According to His promise, we're looking for a new heaven and a new earth." A new heavens and a new earth, wow. So when our Lord...let's go back now to Mark.

So when our Lord says...oh by the way...stay there a minute, I want to tell you one other thing that's really important...really important because I know a question is going on in your mind and I need to answer it. You're saying, "Wait a minute. When the Lord comes, this judgment is going to come and everything is going to be literally totally destroyed. It was created out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, it will go back to nothing. It isn't like matter, it won't just be altered, matter can neither be created or destroyed, it will be destroyed. God can create it and God can destroy it. He put it together with atomic structure and He will destroy it.

You say, "Well if He does that at His coming, then how do we have the Kingdom?" Right? Glad you asked. How do we have the Kingdom? You say, "Well, when He comes, He starts with a destructive work of judgment on these ungodly. It's not till the thousand-year Kingdom is over that He destroys the universe.

You say, "You mean that there's a thousand years between when He comes and begins the day of the Lord judgment and when He finishes it?" That's exactly what I mean. You say, "That's a long time."

Well for all of you asking that question, verse 8 was written. "Do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day." Does that help? Isn't the Bible helpful? So much for that question. Now you can go back to Mark.

There's so much information here, you'll have to forgive me for wandering a little bit before I know where I need to go. We're back in the thirteenth chapter now, back to verse 31 and when we read heaven and earth will pass away, we know what that means now, don't we? "But My words will not pass away."

I'm telling you the future and I'm telling you this, truly I say to you...verse 30...truly and heaven and earth will pass away but My words will not. That's authority. Our Lord always, always, always spoke with this level of authority, this degree of authority. In Luke 16:17, "It is easier...he said to the Pharisees...for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to fail." It is easier for the universe to collapse, and it will, than for one dot to come off an I in My Word. This is a testimony from God as to how He feels about His Word.

This last week the media has been hawking a book by Rob Bell, denying there's a hell. And he claims to be an evangelical Christian. People get all concerned about this issue, but what confuses people is very simple, you're not confused unless you think he's a Christian. If you think he's a Christian, you can be confused. If Christopher Hitchens the atheist said there's no hell, nobody would blink. If an agnostic said there's no hell, nobody would blink. But because a guy says "I'm an evangelical

Christian,” and says there’s no hell. Ohhh! The problem...the problem is not his theology, the problem is his condition. My heart goes out to him because he is really deceived.

Not just about the doctrine of hell, more importantly, about the doctrine of Scripture. He denies Scripture. He does it openly. He says, “I don’t...I don’t believe we can know what the Bible means.” In fact, he is the authority. He is the authority. He says things like this, “Well, what kind of a message is it to tell people that God sends them to hell? We don’t want to tell people that, that’s not nice.” Really! He knows what’s nice, he wants to tell people what’s nice. His problem is not with the doctrine of hell, his problem is with Scripture. His problem is with the authority of Jesus because Jesus said more about hell than He did about heaven. And Jesus is the primary biblical teacher on eternal punishment. Nobody even comes close to the volume of instruction that our Lord gave on that reality. Isaiah 40 and verse 8, “The grass withers...that’s for sure...the flowers fade, but the Word of our God stands forever.” You do not want to tamper with His Word. It is absolutely true, unequivocally true and anyone who tampers with it is in serious, serious condition before God. All that the Lord has said is true.

Now, let’s go back to our text. Jesus says, “I’m telling you how it is and this is the truth...this is the truth.” One other footnote to consider and that is the action required. We’ve seen the analogy, we’ve seen the application, we’ve seen the authority, and just...this is pretty simple even though it leaves us a few verses, you’ll see how rapidly they go by. What’s the action required? Let’s pick it up at verse 32.

“But of that day or hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone, take heed, keep on the alert, you do not know when the appointed time will come. It’s like a man away on a journey who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert, therefore be on the alert for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight or when the rooster crows, or in the morning in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep, what I say to you I say to all, be on the alert.” Four times it says to be on the alert. Four times, once in an illustration and three times as a command. That’s the action.

Now listen. This is still speaking to the future generation that sees the signs. Okay? The message is to the future generation that sees the signs. This is similar to what Jesus said in Luke 12:40, “Be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect,” or Matthew 25:13 version of this, “Be on the alert, you don’t know the day or the hour.” You know the time, the Tribulation. You’ve seen the trigger, the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATIONS. You now know that you’re the generation that is going to see His return. Be on the alert. What you don’t know is the exact day or the exact hour. This is a passage designed to warn the future generation.

You say, "Well what about all the generations between now and then?" Oh, we're all warned of eternal hell. We're all warned to put our trust in Christ so that we don't die in unbelief and go to hell forever. This message is about the end, it's about the wrap up of history. It's answering a specific question. And for those people alive then who see those signs, you're not going to know the exact time. So you can't play fast and loose and try to slide in at the end because you don't know the day and you don't know the hour. In fact, verse 32 says, "Of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven." And they're around the throne of God all the time and they don't know. "Nor the Son," and the Son in His incarnation restricted His knowledge and says, "I don't even know, but the Father...but the Father."

You say, "Well what's the message to us here? What's the message to us? We're not in that generation."

I'll tell you what the message to you is, the message to you is you're going to die and you don't know when and you better be ready. Isn't that the message? The first time I went on The Larry King program, right after 9-11, he said to me, "What's the meaning of the planes flying into the towers and killing all those people? What's the message?"

I said, "The message is everybody is going to die and you aren't in control of when." That's the message. And I said to him, "Nobody died there who isn't going to die. Nobody died whose not going to die. You're just not in control of when. You better be ready. You better be ready." And it just so happens that even though we're not in the Tribulation, even though we haven't had the Rapture of the church, the things that characterize the Tribulation don't seem as if they're far away, do they? We've seen the natural disasters. We've seen the killing power of armies. We can understand how a third of the world could be destroyed, a fourth of the war could be destroyed. The things that are going to be taking place then could take place. It talks about an army of two-hundred million from the east. That's not a stretch. Everything focusing in the Middle East, the Muslims in a campaign to promote the coming of their Messiah, the Mahdi who is the biblical Antichrist, and they think the Mahdi is coming soon.

So the generation who is going to see these things after the Rapture of the church could be very soon, could be this generation. The whole eschatological era could begin at any time. And how does it begin? What is the first thing that happens? The Rapture of the church. There's no sign for that.

And by the way, the New Testament is filled with general admonitions to believers to be waiting eagerly for Christ's coming because the Rapture is the first part of His return, it's the first component. There are three components to His return, if you will. There is His gathering of the church, His return to reign and the final judgment at the end of the Kingdom, and the destruction of the universe and the recreation of a new heaven and a new earth. Actually, it all is wrapped up in the concept of the Day of the Lord. The first part is called the Day of Christ, distinctive because it's not judgment, it's the



Rapture. Then the Day of the Lord breaks through at the beginning of the Tribulation, and the Day of the Lord comes to the end of the Millennium, the seven years and a thousand years later.

So, when we are told to look for His appearing. We have this blessed hope. And what is our blessed hope? Are we looking for Antichrist, anybody looking for Antichrist? We're looking for Christ, aren't we? That's our blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even John says at the end of Revelation, "Come, Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus." He's waiting for the Lord to come and to gather Him. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1, "Eager for the Lord's coming." James in 5...chapter 5 verses 7 and 8, "The coming of the Lord is near." First Peter 4:7, "We're waiting for the Lord."

But the warnings specifically in this passage are an answer to the question about the final generation. Now let's go back to verse 32 for a minute. "Of that day, or hour, no one knows." It will not be revealed to anyone. That hasn't stopped people from making ridiculous predictions. Why do people do that? They started in 90 A.D. with Clement I and then in the second century there was a group called The Montanists who made a prediction of the coming of the Lord. Then there was Joseph Smith of Mormon fame who predicted the Lord would come in 1832, or 1890, or maybe now 1891. Then there were the Millerites who said the Lord is coming March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1843. Oh no, October 22, 1844. That didn't work out either.

Then there's Ellen G. White, Seventh Day Adventism, who said the Lord would come in 1850. Guess not, 1856. Then there are the Jehovah's Witnesses who said the Lord would come in 1914, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1925, '41, '75, 1990 and they're still making dates. So if you're in that movement, get out. They don't know, no one knows. And that is a dead giveaway of a false system. They don't know. The angels don't even know and they're hanging around the throne. The angels don't know, but we in our group, we know. Oh really! Wow!

Then He says, "Not even the Son knows." The Lord voluntarily restricted the use of His attributes, that's the *gnosis* in Philippians 2. He laid aside His divine prerogatives, not His divine nature or His attributes but the prerogative to use them to the will of the Father and did only what the Father told Him to do, showed Him to do and revealed to Him all things, John 15:15, "I have heard from My father I made known to you what the Father told him He knew and revealed." By the way, after His resurrection, after His resurrection, He resumed full knowledge. Listen to Acts 1, "So when they had come together, they were asking Him, 'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the Kingdom to Israel?'" Listen to what He said. "It is not for you to know." He didn't say, "It's not for Me to know anymore." Once He rose from the dead, the incarnation and the restrictions were behind Him, it was not for you to know...not for you to know. His humiliation had ended and He was given back the full prerogatives of deity.

Well to that generation alive in the future, since you're not going to know the day or the hour, verse 33 says, "Take heed, keep on the alert, for you do not know when the appointed time will come." It's already been set in the Father's plan, Acts 1:7, it's fixed in the Father's plan. By the way, He knows the time. The Father knows the time, He says that, right?, in verse 32, "The Father knows it, it's fixed," according to Acts 1, "firmly established as firmly established as the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ in A.D. 30 in the week of Passover on Friday," etc. You better take heed and be on the alert.

Then He gives another analogy. "It's like a man away on a journey who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert." Just a simple little illustration. The owner of an estate leaves. He puts his slaves in charge of all their responsibility and he identifies one to be a doorkeeper who stays on the alert to let the master in when he returns. They would take that very, very seriously, that duty, and He is saying to that generation in the future that sees these things happen, "You better be on the alert. You don't know when the master is coming back." And He repeats it again in verse 35, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming," and here He's drawing out His little analogy from verse 34, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning.

Why all of that? The Roman...the Roman period of time in which there was always a watch was from six in the evening, sundown, to six in the morning, sunrise. That is the period of night when the Romans set a watch. Mark is in a Roman context when he writes and he knows he will have Roman readers who read and so he borrows from their familiar understanding. In the Roman twelve-hour watch, there are four three-hour periods. There is, you can go back to verse 35, the evening from six to nine. Then there is midnight, which identifies the final hour, nine to midnight. Then there is rooster crows at three A.M. and morning at six. So you don't know when the master is going to come. You don't know if he's going to come in the evening, at midnight, rooster crow or morning, the names identifying the end of each period. These watches, by the way, are also mentioned in Mark 14 and Mark 15 in the account that is given of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Be on the alert...Be on the alert.

Now just as a footnote, the disciples wouldn't be a good model of being on the alert in this gospel. You remember the fourteenth chapter, cause I know you know the account, we'll get to it in a week or so, how He took them into the Garden to pray with Him and they all did...what?...fell asleep, right. They would not be great examples of making sure you stayed awake. In verse 34 of chapter 14 He says, "Remain here and stay awake." Verse 37, "He comes back and finds them sleeping and says, 'Can't you stay awake and keep watch for one hour?'" In verse 38, "Keep watching." He repeats it in verse 40, repeats it in verse 41.

So that's the antithesis of watchfulness and alertness. Our Lord warns those in the future Tribulation to be much more vigilant than the disciples were in this situation. And then He repeats it again in verse 37. "You don't want the master to come back suddenly and find you sleeping like the disciples will do. What I say to you I say to all, be on the alert." That final generation needs to be alert.

They're going to see the signs. They're going to see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION. They're not going to know the day or the hour. They're going to be living in such fear because of the horrors that are coming on them.

To close, I want you to turn to Luke 21...Luke 21 and verse 34. This is Luke's parallel account of our Lord's sermon. Verse 34 of Luke 21, "Be on guard...be on guard," that's Luke's version of being alert, "so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap." Be on the alert...be on the alert. Vigilance. That generation needs to be alert. "For it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth." Now we know he's not talking about the Rapture, right? Cause that only comes to take believers out. This is His coming and the warning then is to the generation alive at that time. But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place and to stand before the Son of Man.

Do you know what that means? That's a call for salvation. Pray...pray that your heart not be weighted down, overpowered, overwhelmed, pray that you not get caught up in trying to find comfort in immorality, dissipation, drunkenness. Pray that you not be paralyzed by what He calls the anxieties of life or the worries of life, pulling you in too many directions, disorienting you, things that cause you to struggle. This is a call to the future generation who will read the Bible and read the scriptures, to not allow themselves to be fragmented and pulled apart, to not try to drown their fears in alcohol, or immorality. By the way, the word "dissipation" speaks of the nausea that accompanies debauchery. Don't let that happen. Don't go that way because if you do, that day will come on you suddenly like a trap, unexpectedly. You'll be snared with no possible escape.

And the end of all of these warnings is in verse 36, "Keep on the alert, praying that you may have strength to escape these things that are about to take place and stand before the Son of Man." To stand there in His presence, that is to be saved. To stand and look at Him as your Lord and Savior, you want to escape the final judgment, you want to stand before the Son of Man. Be accepted by Him, welcomed, approved, embraced.

So what did the Lord tell the disciples is the end? In the future, after a long period of history, when a time of Tribulation comes, you know you're in the final generation from the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION to the coming of Christ is just a very brief time. When you see the signs, you know He's near, He's at the door. And the generation that sees the beginning of it, will certainly see the end of it. All of this is written down on the pages of Scripture for the warning of that generation.

But it applies to us as well because we want to do everything we can to proclaim the glorious gospel of Christ now so that non-believers won't have to go into that horrific time of judgment. We're in a rescue operation, aren't we? We are not going to be in the Tribulation. We want to take as many people as we can with us to glory before it happens.

Well, let's close in a word of prayer.

We thank You, Lord, for again the opportunity of being together with those who love You and love Your Word, love Your truth. How thrilling it is to dig into things that many people think are incomprehensible and to find them so simply revealed that a wayfaring man, though he be a fool need not error. We thank You for the clear revelation. We thank You for its truthfulness and its authority. We not only have a view of eschatology, we have Your view of eschatology and You spoke it to us and wrote it with authority which means we're commanded to believe this because it is Your Word and it will come to pass as You said. We can see that in history and it will be that way to the end. Your Word will never pass away until it's all fulfilled.

We are not the most noble and the mighty and the wise of the world, but we know these massive, massive realities that the world doesn't know because You have revealed them to us. The Scripture says, "These things are hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes." We are so privileged. Enable us to have opportunity to proclaim these truths, to preach the gospel against the background of coming judgment of the horrors of the Tribulation that could start any time. Help us to preach as to men on the brink on the edge of judgment, either by death or by the coming of the Tribulation. Use us to rescue souls from its inevitable horrors. Gather in Your people, we pray, for Your glory. Amen.

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