



CHRISTCHURCH, The Grove, Ilkley
Online@9 - Sunday 30 November 2008
Advent Sunday

Coming . . . ready or not!

Mark 13 vv1-2 and 24-37 - The Coming of the Son of Man

¹ As Jesus was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said, "Look, Teacher! What wonderful stones and buildings!"

² Jesus answered, "You see these great buildings? Not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down."

²⁴ "In the days after that time of trouble the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine, ²⁵ the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in space will be driven from their courses.

²⁶ Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ He will send the angels out to the four corners of the earth to gather God's chosen people from one end of the world to the other.

²⁸ "Let the fig tree teach you a lesson. When its branches become green and tender and it starts putting out leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that the time is near, ready to begin. ³⁰ Remember that all these things will happen before the people now living have all died. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

³² "No one knows, however, when that day or hour will come — neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; only the Father knows. ³³ Be on watch, be alert, for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It will be like a man who goes away from home on a journey and leaves his servants in charge, after giving to each one his own work to do and after telling the doorkeeper to keep watch. ³⁵ Be on guard, then, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming — it might be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or at sunrise. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. ³⁷ What I say to you, then, I say to all: Watch!"

The passage suggests that we should be ready for the return of the Son of Man. In the verses preceding Chapter 13 v24 Jesus tells his disciples that there will be signs. Just as you can tell summer is coming by looking at the trees - Jesus uses a fig tree in his example - there will be signs to show when he is to come again. Jesus is warning us to be ready. The key verse is Mark 13 v32. The exact day and time is a secret that the Father has kept to himself. It has not been shared with the angels or even Jesus himself.

1. Have you ever been in a situation when you desperately wanted to know WHEN something would happen? Why do we sometimes feel like that?
2. In the reading (verses 26 and 27) we are told that the Son of Man WILL appear and his angels will gather up God's chosen people from throughout the world. Yet, we are not told WHEN this event will take place. We must be ready at all times for the return of Jesus. How can we do that? What steps can we take?
3. Jesus' command to his disciples was to be alert, to keep awake, to be on watch, while the Master is away. So how does that command translate into the lives of Christian disciples today? What do you observe happening in the world today that raises the need for us to be more watchful?

We know when Christmas is coming and we are all looking forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus. Do we look forward to Him coming again with the same sense of excitement and anticipation? Do we really want it to happen in our lifetime? Are you ready? Are you there yet? The more we know the one who is coming back, the more we can look forward to it.