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MARK 13:24-37

HE'S COMING BACK

THIS WEEK'S **focus**

Good things can be hard to wait for, especially when you don't know when they will happen. Likewise, hard things can be difficult to endure when you don't know how long they will last. Both situations can be tough, but they're easier to get through when you know what you're supposed to be doing while you wait. In today's story, Jesus will tell His disciples some of what the future holds, but it won't all be good news. His encouragement to them is His encouragement to us: things are going to get worse before they get better, but it's going to be okay in the end. He's coming back! Watch for Him.



CENTRAL **truth**

Jesus will return one day.



EXPLORE

scripture

MARK 13:24-37

MARK 13:24-27

24 “But in those days, following that distress, ‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; **25** the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ **26** “At that time people will

see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. **27** And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

MARK 13:28-31

28 “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. **29** Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near,

right at the door. **30** Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. **31** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

MARK 13:32-37

32 But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **33** Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. **34** It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35 “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. **36** If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. **37** What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

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MARK 13:24-37
CONVERSATION

questions

▶ READ MARK 13:24-37.

.01 How might this description of the last days have been encouraging to the disciples? How does it make you feel?

.02 Why do you think Jesus's return to earth will be so much more public than His first arrival on earth?

.03 Whom will the angels gather up for Jesus when He returns? Where will the angels go to get them?



THEOLOGY

Jesus's "elect" (see v. 27) are those who have put their faith in Him for salvation. Because the word elect suggests choosing (that is, election) on God's part, some people think God only makes salvation available to some. However, the Bible tells us God doesn't want anyone to perish (see 2 Pet. 3:9). According to John, God loved the whole world through Jesus. Whoever believes in Jesus will not perish but have eternal life (see John 3:16). The apostle Paul said that God plans to punish those who disobey the gospel of Jesus (see 2 Thess. 1:8), which suggests everyone has been given the opportunity to obey. Regardless, here's what we know for sure: those who choose Jesus are also chosen by Him. They are His elect. This being true, it's important to pay attention when the Holy Spirit urges us to put our faith in Jesus for salvation and to do what He says without hesitation (see John 6:44-45).

▶ **READ MARK 13:28-31.**

.04 Why is it important for followers of Jesus to pay attention to what's going on in the world?

.05 What is comforting about the promise that Jesus's words will never pass away? When does this help?

▶ **READ MARK 13:32-37.**

.06 Why do you think God chooses to keep the day and time of Jesus's return secret? What might happen if we knew?

.07 What are followers of Jesus supposed to do while we wait for Him to return?

.08 How does someone who is eagerly anticipating Jesus's return behave?

Q **GIVE AN ANSWER**

If Jesus is God, why didn't He know when He's going to return? We know from John that Jesus was with God in the beginning, and He was God (see John 1:1). Then He became human and lived among us (see John 1:14). When Jesus became human, He continued to also be God, but He put aside the option of doing some of the things God does. God is omniscient: this means He knows everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen. However, Jesus put aside His omniscience while He was on earth and living as a human. The Father did show Jesus things other people didn't know, like some people's thoughts (see Mark 2:8), but Jesus did not live in a constant state of knowing everything while He was among us on earth.

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MARK 13:24-37

NOW

what?



CENTRAL truth

Jesus will return one day.

.09 How should we let the promise of Jesus's return impact the way we live now?

.10 How can we encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ while we anticipate Jesus's return together?

.11 What steps can we take to make sure we don't get lazy in Jesus's physical absence?

.12 How should the unknown date and time of Jesus's return impact the way we interact with people who don't know Him?

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE MARK 13:31

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

MARK 13:24-27

DWELL

It's nice to be part of the club, to know you belong to something bigger and more important than yourself. When Jesus comes back, that feeling of belonging will be magnified to an unimaginable degree when His angels come to fetch us to His side. When we reach Him, we'll see things from a perspective we've only ever imagined before, and we'll have the overwhelming peace and joy that comes with knowing everything will really and truly be okay from that point on.



What do these verses teach you about Jesus's nature as the Son of God? How is that different from how the disciples experienced Him before His resurrection?



How do these verses give you hope for the future? How could you pray with these verses in mind?

MEMORIZE

Write Mark 13:31 on a few sticky notes, and put the notes in places you will see them throughout the day. When you see one, stop and read it out loud.

PRAY

Thank God for the hope you have in Jesus and for this miraculous event you have to look forward to. Ask Him to give faith to the people around you who don't know Him so they can experience it with you.

day 2

MARK 13:28-31

DWELL

When you're watching and waiting for something as miraculous as Jesus's return with a bunch of people who have been longing for it, the likelihood is pretty high that someone will misread the signs they've been told to watch for. Because so many of the signs Jesus predicted are commonplace now, it's a good idea to give things time to develop before we claim we know what's happening. Instead of being disappointed when events don't lead to Jesus's immediate return, we should be thankful for the reminder to stay busy while we watch.

→ We are closer now to Jesus coming back than we have ever been. How should this affect the way you live?

↪ How should the fact that Jesus is more permanent than the heavens or the earth influence the way you interact with Him?

MEMORIZE

Write down Mark 13:31 in a journal or on a note card, and circle any words that feel important. Look at just those words for a few moments, then close your eyes and say them. When you can get them all right without looking, try doing the same thing with the whole verse.

PRAY

Thank God for giving you things to look for while you wait for Jesus to return. Thank Him you don't have to wait alone.

day 3

MARK 13:32-37

DWELL

If God didn't expect us to be doing something while we wait, it wouldn't matter when Jesus was coming back. After all, the angels are going to come get us when it's time to go. Jesus told us to watch because He knows what we are like—we get easily distracted from the things we're supposed to be doing. Of course, it's easy to get sidetracked when the wait drags on, but imagining how we will feel when we see Him is a good motivator to stay focused and busy.

↑ Why is it appropriate that God is the only One who knows when Jesus is coming back?

↓ What kinds of things do spiritually awake people do? What kinds of things do spiritually asleep people do?

MEMORIZE

See how much of Mark 13:31 you can remember by writing it down without looking. Check your work. Add or change as necessary and study it. Practice doing this throughout the week until you get it!

PRAY

Tell God how excited you are about Jesus's promised return. Tell Him how you want to feel when you see Him. Thank Him for the warning to stay alert.

day 4

MARK 13:13

DWELL

Jesus explained to the disciples that they would be persecuted. Things would get so bad, they would be tempted to turn away from Jesus. Their resilience wouldn't save them; instead, it would reveal they had been saved. Those of us who have put our faith in Jesus really have no reason to worry we'll turn away. When pressed, we won't be able to. People who know Jesus are loyal to Him (see John 8:31).

← How do you think the disciples felt at this moment? How would you have felt?

↔ How can we encourage fellow believers when they are struggling to hold on to faith in an unbelieving world?

MEMORIZE

Try singing Mark 13:31 to the tune of a song you know well. Practice singing the verse to yourself as best as you can throughout the week.

PRAY

Thank God that He gives us the strength to withstand persecution or mocking and remain loyal to Him. Thank Him for the privilege of being associated with Him.

day 5

LUKE 12:35-40

DWELL

This parable is similar to the one Jesus shared in this week's lesson, but it paints a more vivid picture of Jesus's return. It evokes the kind of feeling we want to experience in real life and we should let it motivate us to follow Jesus's instructions while we wait for His return. Imagine knowing that your watchful waiting is over and Jesus is so proud of you that He asks you to recline at His table while He waits on you. What a joy and relief that would be!

→ How can we be ready for Jesus's return if we don't know when He's coming?

↻ What do you think it means to have your lamps lit? How can you do this?

MEMORIZE

Try reciting Mark 13:31 from memory. Ask a friend or family member to help you by reminding you of any words you've forgotten.

PRAY

Thank God for this happy image to hang onto while you wait to be reunited with Jesus. Ask Him to guide you as you try to keep your lamp lit and stay watchful.