



HE IS COMING BACK

Keep Watch!
Mark 13:24-37
March 10, 2019

When you have an airport layover, you can do some work, find ways to entertain yourself or take a nap. But no one confuses a layover with their final destination. Whatever you do, you must make sure everything is in order for your flight and then stay alert so you don't miss it!

When you have a layover on earth, you can do some work, find ways to entertain yourself or take some naps. For some reason, though, many people confuse our layover on earth as their final destination. Instead, we need to make sure we are ready for our flight to our final destination and keep watch for its arrival. That is the subject of Mark 13:24-37.

The mysterious language in vv. 24-25 is figurative and points to God's intervention on earth. Jesus is coming back! At his first coming he was incognito, revealing only glimpses of his glory (Mark 9:2-9; John 2:11). This time he will appear in his true, glorious nature (v. 26). He will gather his elect from all over the earth (v. 27). Elect means "chosen" and refers to the people he called and who responded to his call (Matthew 22:1-4), namely Christians (Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 2:9). Though not stated here, he is coming to take his elect to our final destination (John 14:1-3).

In Mark 13:28-31, Jesus explains that, just as tender twigs and leaves on a fig tree point to the nearness of summer, so there

will be recognizable signs of the impending destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 (described in vv. 1-23). "These" things (vv. 29, 30) refer to events that are *closer* in time to when he was talking (technically, the nearer demonstrative pronoun), that is, the destruction of Jerusalem. "That" day (v. 32) refers to an event that is *further* in time to when he was talking (technically, the remote demonstrative pronoun). People would be able to see indications that "these" things were coming, and sure enough they took place within a generation (in AD 70, about 35 years later).

Concerning "that" day, however, no one knows the time except God the Father (v. 32). The right response to not knowing when he will come is *not* to try to figure it out. Instead, it is to recognize that it could be anytime (v. 35) and so be on guard, be alert, keep watch, keep watch (again), not be sleeping and watch (vv. 33-37). It is imperative that we stay alert and not miss our flight to our final destination.

Jesus also tells us our situation is like a wealthy man who entrusts the care of his household to his servants and then goes away on a journey. Each servant is assigned a task. Focusing on our task is a great way to be ready when the master returns.

Jesus' words here tell us that 1) earth is not our final destination. Instead, it is a time for making arrangements for getting to our true home. 2) Once we've made the arrangements, we need to make sure we don't grow dull with the passing of time or fall asleep or get so enamored with the airport that we miss our flight. 3) Like faithful servants, we need to recognize what our Master has called us to do and persevere in our assigned task until he comes back for us. 4) If we really believe he could be coming back at any moment to take us to a better place, we would have more urgency about telling others and helping them make arrangements to go too.

