

The Greatest News Story of All Time

(Mark 13:24-27)

(preached 11/15/15; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Though many people thought that the internet would make newspapers go the way of the dinosaur, they have continued to hold on in our world...

I am sure that the internet has changed the way newspapers do business but many are still around and doing quite well.

Before the days of the internet, newspapers were the source of information in the world...

Sure, you could watch TV but if you wanted the whole news story, you would go get a newspaper...

Though I grew up reading the sports page of the Greenville News, I don't consider myself a newspaper expert.

However, most do not understand the importance of the newspaper headline...

The headline is simply the title of a newspaper article that sits right below it...

And headlines play a very important role in reading the newspaper...

One glance at a headline either makes you want to read it or skip to the next story...

But the most important headline is the one on the first page of the paper above the fold...

That headline is usually reserved for the biggest story of the previous day...

The bigger the story, the bigger the headline...

On most days, even though the top story is the most important story, the above the fold headline usually has normal size letters....

However, on certain special occasions when the story is of historical importance, newspaper often have headlines that are really big...

The moon landing...

The end of WW II...

Or like you see on the screen now, the assassination of John Kennedy..

These were all incredible news stories, and so the size of the headline the following day needed to just as big...

In the newspaper business, the size of these headlines are often called “Second Coming” type headlines...

According to the Post-Journal in Jamestown NY, “Second Coming” type was almost never used in headlines except for world changing events...

In that case, Second Coming headlines were 72 point font...

That would similar to what you see in this headline in the NY World Telegram on Nov 23, 1963, the day after President John Kennedy was killed in Dallas, Tx.

For that paper on that day, the president’s death was worthy of Second Coming headline type.

I think the term “Second Coming” headline type is an interesting description that newspapers have used to describe incredible headlines...

By using the term even they acknowledge that the Second Coming will be a world changing news story..

I have entitled this message...

“The Greatest News Story of All Time,” but that is not even an appropriate description of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ...

To say that it will change the course of the world is even an understatement..

Because it will be the event of all time..

It will be the event that the creation has groaned for ever since the world was stained by sin.

It will be the event where God’s justice will finally begin to be realized in the world...

It will be the event where God’s people will begin to see the blessings of being right with God through His Son, Jesus Christ..

It will be the event where Jesus is finally seen for who He truly is....

And the King of kings and the Lord of lords..

And it will also be so much more...

We are going to look at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ this morning in Mark 13:24-27...

In these 4 verses, we will listen to Jesus describe his own second coming back to this world...

And we will see some incredible truths about it.

I have divided these four verses into 2 outline points...

In verses 24-25, we will see...

I. A Return that Shakes the Heavens (24-25)

Then we will see...

II. A Return that Glorifies the King (26-27)

In verses 26-27.

There is but one question that I need to ask everyone as we prepare to look at the Second Coming...

Do you look upon this day with joy or fear?

Does it excite you to think of Jesus returning to set this world in order?

Or does it cause you great anxiety to think about that day and wonder where you will be in it..

There are but 2 choices in this world as we think about the Lord's return to the earth...

You will either be right with that king because you have repented and trusted in Him...

Or you will be receiving that king's judgment...

That is not a threat to scare you ...

It a truth to move you to repentance and faith in that King.

So, consider that this morning as we look into Mark 13:24-27...

Let's read these 4 verses to get us started....

Mark 13:24-27....

24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in [m]the heavens will be shaken. 26 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then He will send forth the angels, and will gather together His [n]elect from the four winds, from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of heaven.

I. A Return that Shakes the Heavens (24-25)

Let us take a minute to review what we have already learned in Mark 13...

These verse that we just read are part of Jesus' class on the end times that he gave to the disciples on the Mount of Olives..

This teaching, which began in Mark 13:5, occurred on the Wednesday evening before Jesus was to be crucified on Friday.

Wednesday had been a long day for Jesus and the disciples in the temple in Jerusalem...

The Jewish religious leaders had attacked Jesus all day in the temple, trying to trap him with misleading questions, in hopes that the crowds would turn on him...

The leaders were out to destroy Jesus for exposing their religion's greed and erroneous teaching...

Jesus had survived the day and the attacks with incredible answers to their questions and it was late in the evening as he left the temple with his disciples..

They would have walked down the large hill of the temple mount and then began the walk up the Mount of Olives to the east...

And while they were walking, one of disciples simply looked at the temple and marveled at its beauty...

Jesus quickly replied that it would all fall down.

The disciples knew that the Jewish religion was corrupt.

They had heard Jesus teach about the evil actions of its leaders...

They had listened to Jesus talk about the error filled teaching of the Pharisees and scribes...

They had witnessed a poor widow being robbed of her last two cents because of the burden of a greedy religion...

Jesus simply confirmed their suspicions that it was going to fall when He told them that the temple would be destroyed...

They were like the man whose car has been acting up...

So, he takes it to the mechanic, who simply says, “Yep, it is broke.”

The natural question after that statement is “When can you have it fixed?”

So after Jesus tells the disciples that the Jewish religion and the Jewish temple is broken, their next question was simply...

When will you fix it Jesus?

And that question led Jesus to sit down on the Mount of Olives and tell them when He was coming to fix it...

And for the past 2 weeks, we have getting a crash course from Jesus on the time that leads up to his return to fix everything....

And we have looked at these events that Jesus describes here, and I have suggested to you that all these events are the future events of the tribulation period....

Which will simply be a period of 7 years that serve as a lead up to Jesus coming back and fixing it all...

We have talked about the fact that Jesus doesn't answer the question by taking the disciples through the 1000s of years that will pass before His return..

He doesn't talk about 100 AD, then 200 AD....

He takes them directly to the 7 years that will lead up to his 2nd Coming to this earth...

And He gives them guideposts to look for to know that his return is near...

He doesn't give them a date or a century...

As a little kid, I couldn't wait to get to the beach...

Now, the ride from Whitmire took over 3 hours...

And it seemed to go one forever....

But once my dad said, "We are in Conway." Guess what?

I near the beach was near...

And that is saying to the disciples...

He doesn't give them a time frame...

He is offering landmark events that will let that future generation know that His return is right around the corner....

And we looked at those events over the past two weeks...

Wars, earthquakes, people claiming to be Jesus will all be clues that his approach is near..

Persecution, family betrayal, the abomination of desolation, worldwide catastrophes....

All these are the signals that Jesus is right at door waiting to return...

And so, we have been hearing these things along with the disciples...

But today, we move from going through Conway to sitting on the beach...

Because today, we see the Lord's return...

Now, if you were here last Sunday night, we did a big overview of the end times....

I am going to put that chart up for us to look at as we set the stage for the 2nd Coming of Christ..

If you look at the screen, the 2nd Coming is the event that comes after the 7 year tribulation period, the reason we know that is because of what you see in verse 24...

24 “But in those days, after that tribulation,…”

So, that provides the time frame of the event that we are going to look in these verses..

This would be a time at the end of the 7 year tribulation period...

From what we see in the Bible, the conditions on the earth at this time would be total devastation...

80% of the world’s population has been killed from the catastrophes of the tribulation...

Famines, huge hailstones, fire from heaven, diseases, have all taken their toll on the world’s population...

We also know that because of all the panic and devastation, the world has united under one super powerful individual known as the AntiChrist...

And by the end of the tribulation, he will be gathering the world’s armies to fight against God and Israel..

We see a picture of this day in Revelation 19:19...

19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

The world is in chaos; the Antichrist will be blaming God for all the destruction...

And he will gather a world wide army in hopes of defeating God and Israel...

So, that is the setting of verse 24...

And then we read of the immediate signs of Jesus' return...

The sun is darkened, the moon will not give light, and stars will fall from heaven...

This is a great illustration of how the Bible all fits together in perfect harmony from beginning to end...

Here Jesus tells us that his 2nd Coming will be preceded by signs in the sun, moon, and stars...

Two Sunday nights ago, we looked at the book of Joel...

In Joel 3:14-16, God gave Joel a preview of the Second Coming, which is often called the Day of the Lord...

Joel was writing 800 years before Jesus said these words to His disciples on the Mount of Olives...

But amazingly, Joel 3:14-16 says this..

14

***Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of [h]decision!
For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of
[i]decision.***

15

***The sun and moon grow dark
And the stars lose their brightness.***

16

***The Lord roars from Zion
And utters His voice from Jerusalem,
And the heavens and the earth tremble.***

The valley of discussion is simply the valley where the Antichrist all gather his armies to fight against God...

And then what do we see before the Lord returns to destroy those armies..

The whole universe is shaken...

The sun and the moon grow dark, the stars cease to shine and some fall to earth...

And that is just one reference for us to look out, there are numerous other OT passages that teach of the heavens being shaken as the Lord returns...

And the reason for this is to demonstrate to the world the unique nature of the Second Coming...

And here is what I mean...

The world trusts in certain events so much that our lives are set by them..

For instance, people count on the sun rising and then setting every day...

Our months are based on the appearance of the regular cycle of the appearance of the moon...

People trust in the position of the stars in order to navigate around the world...

But guess what, the sun may not always rise and the moon may not always give light in a predictable way, and the stars may fall out of the sky...

Just imagine if the north star fell or lost its light...

That would be unexplainable, yet that may be the case one day to signal the Second Coming..

And so we see that the sun, moon, stars, and in fact the entire universe will be shaken as Jesus prepares to return to this world...

That is a return that will shake the heavens...

Not let's look at...

II. A Return that Glorifies the King (26-27)

In verse 26, we read of the greatest event the world will ever witness as Jesus returns to the earth a second time...

According to the verse, he will come in the clouds...

Most likely, this will be a cloud similar to the cloud of God's presence that led Israel out of Egypt...

But this will even be more glorious than that, as Jesus returns to make the world right...

Verse 26 also mentions that he will come in power and glory...

This is so important to remember...

Jesus' 1st Coming to the earth was filled with humility and mercy as he was born unnoticed in a stable in Bethlehem..

Yet, when He returns a 2nd time, it will be noticed by everyone and he will coming displaying His power...

You know I think about unbelievers in that day of the Second Coming...

Some of them may have gone to church and heard the stories about Jesus...

And then when he returns, they may be expecting to run up to Him and embrace Him...

Yet, that will not be the case...

He may have come the first time as a Lamb to die for His people...

But he will return as a Lion to destroy all who have rejected Him...

And you see a glimpse of that here as we see his return will be glorious and powerful...

As he returns to judge the world and take His seat as King of the universe...

The opportunity to embrace Him as Lord will have passed, and the day of judgment will have come..

You can also get a glimpse of the power and glory in that day in Revelation 19....

In verses 11-16, we get a few more details of what this return will look like..

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will [d]rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the [e]wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Obviously, Jesus will be the center of attention on that day, as he comes to destroy the armies of the Antichrist..

But even in that display of power and glory, we also see his mercy and grace...

As he allows believers to join with Him in His return..

He will have no need for us, yet we will mount up beside our King and watch Him return in glory and power...

And then we also see mercy on this day as well in verse 27...

Which says that Jesus will send his angels to gather the elect from all over the earth....

These will those people who were saved during the 7 year tribulation period and have survived to the very end of it as well..

We see that they will be all over the world in that day and Jesus will graciously gather them all to Himself with an angelic flight....

Now, all of this is simple preparation for the next event of the End Times....

Which will be the 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth...

If you go back to our graph, you will see that the Second Coming is followed by the Millennial Kingdom, where Jesus will set himself as king over this present world for 1000 years...

We know from Daniel 12 that Jesus won't return one day and then start his rule the next day....

From what we see there will be a period of 75 days from His Second Coming to the beginning of the 1000 years...

But we will look at that a little more tonight..

However, let's take a moment to look at why the Second Coming is so important in God's plan....

1) *The Second Coming is important because God is a God of His Word...*

In Acts 1 as Jesus was leaving the earth after his resurrection to go back to heaven, we read this...

9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into [h]the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11 They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into [i]the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

2) *The Second Coming is important because God is a God of justice...*

20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs [h]in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with [i]brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Sin and wickedness and rejection of Jesus will be judged and Jesus' 2nd Coming will accomplish some of that judgment.

In terms of God's plan, everyone who enters the 1000 year kingdom of Jesus will be a believer...

And the Second Coming makes sure that no unbelievers enter that Millennial Kingdom...

We will talk more about that tonight...

3) The Second Coming is important because God is a God of faithfulness..

16

***The Lord roars from Zion
And utters His voice from Jerusalem,
And the heavens and the earth tremble.
But the Lord is a refuge for His people
And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.***

17

***Then you will know that I am the Lord your God,
 Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain.
 So Jerusalem will be holy,
 And strangers will pass through it no more.***

The Old Testament is clear.

When God promised to be Israel's God, His promise was forever...

And even though the nation rejected Christ for centuries, prior to his return they will see their error, repent of their unbelief and embrace Jesus as Messiah...

His Second Coming makes that possible and allows Israel to enter into a 1000 year reign where all God's promises to them will be filled...

4) The Second Coming is important because God is a God of Redemption...

If you let your mind go back to the very beginning of time...

God created this world in 6 days, and he created Adam and Eve to rule over this world for Him..

They were supposed to subdue and fill and rule over it...

22

Yet, by Genesis 3, they had fallen into sin and plunged the world into darkness...

In short, the first ruler that God set over this world was named Adam, but he failed miserably....

When sin entered the world, the world spiraled out of control for centuries and is still spiraling out of control today...

However, the Second Coming will reverse the curse in every way...

The first king God sent to rule the world failed miserably, but the second King that God sends to rule his world will succeed abundantly...

The Second Coming is important because God is God of redemption and hope...

Where Adam failed, Jesus will triumph...

1 Cor 15:21-22...

21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in [h]Christ all will be made alive.

Adam gave us sin...

Jesus gives us forgiveness of sin.

Adam gave us a fallen world..

Jesus will give us a perfect world..

Adam gave us the curse of Satan.

Jesus will give us the Kingdom of God.

The Second Coming will be the start of the world as it was meant to be enjoyed by those who love the Lord...

As the disciples sat and listened to this, I can't help but think that they couldn't wait to see all that Jesus was describing in verses 24-27...

They had lived under Roman rule all their lives...

They had seen injustice with their own eyes..

They had witnessed sin of the worst kind..

They knew the world was broken.

They knew that that the religion that they had grown up in was corrupt...

But more than all that, they knew that Jesus was the One coming to make it all right...

I am sure after hearing this, they couldn't wait for His return...

I pray that thought fills our heart this morning as we consider this passage this morning..

Do you look forward to the Second Coming of Christ?

Does the promise of a 1000 reign upon this earth excite you?

Or does it scare you half to death?

Will you be a part of that kingdom?

Or will you be waiting outside that kingdom to be judged forever for your sins?

Are you right the King who is coming?

Have you turned from your sins and believed in Christ?

The promise of the gospel that we preach here..

Is that the King who is waiting to return is now offering you a chance to be a part of His kingdom today...

True repentance that shows remorse your sins and completely turns from those sins...

Combined with belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ who came and died in your place on a cross...

True repentance and true faith in Christ leads to forgiveness of sins, eternal life in heaven, and a white horse to ride in the Second Coming...

Why hold on to your sin so tightly when forgiveness of that sin is available today?

Who wants to be a victim of God's justice when you can be a recipient of God's mercy today..

The Second is a both a blessing and a warning..

For those of us in Christ, what a blessing to see how this world will come to a close and a new world will be born of which we will be a part.

For those outside of Christ today, what a warning in this passage on the Second Coming...

Today is the day to embrace the Lamb of God
before you face the Lion of God...

Conclusion

For our closing hymn this morning, we are going to
sing Joy to the World...

And I know what you are thinking, it isn't even
thanksgiving yet, so why are we singing Christmas
hymn...

Well, the truth about Joy to the World is that it was
not meant to be a Christmas Hymn...

Isaac Watts wrote this hymn about the Second
Coming, not the first coming of Jesus Christ..

Watts was a lover of the book of Psalms and Psalm
98 is a psalm that celebrates the Second Coming,
when God will set all things right in the world..

And Watts simply read that psalm and then wrote to
the world based upon Psalm 98...

I am going to read that psalm to end the message
this morning and then we are going to sing a song
that celebrates the joy of Christ's Second Coming..

98

*O sing to the Lord a new song,
For He has done wonderful things,
His right hand and His holy arm have [a]gained
the victory for Him.*

2

*The Lord has made known His salvation;
He has revealed His [b]righteousness in the sight
of the nations.*

3

*He has remembered His lovingkindness and His
faithfulness to the house of Israel;
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of
our God.*

4

*Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth;
Break forth and sing for joy and sing praises.*

5

*Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
With the lyre and the [c]sound of melody.*

6

*With trumpets and the sound of the horn
Shout joyfully before the King, the Lord.*

7

*Let the sea roar and [d]all it contains,
The world and those who dwell in it.*

8

*Let the rivers clap their hands,
Let the mountains sing together for joy*

9

*Before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the
earth;
He will judge the world with righteousness
And the peoples with [e]equity.*

Let us pray...