

Last Sunday of the Church Year

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 51:4-6

4 “Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples. 5 My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.

51:4-6 – It may be remarked that this section contains a number of expressions that are clearly echoes of the Servant passages. (Leupold)

Cf 42:1–4; 49:6. The Lord will send His Servant to bestow these gifts. The Lord comes to His waiting people, not the other way around. Note the terms set parallel here: “law,” “justice,” “light,” “righteousness,” “salvation,” and “My arms.” (TLSB)

51:4 *give attention* – The Lord is about to make a solemn pronouncement to which He wants His people to give strict attention. (Leupold)

kawshab – To perk up one’s ears and pay close attention to what is about to be said. To hold the coming message in high regard.

Give ear tro me, my nation – God is deeply concerned for the future of His own. Israel is the basis of all development but what is developed there is for the people generally. (Leupold)

awzan – To expand or broaden out one’s ear so as to take in everything that is said. All growth and development is to begin with instruction from the Lord.

law ... my justice.† The rule of the servant would bring justice. (CSB)

In the OT era, the coastlands largely waited in vain for Yahweh’s teaching to go forth from Israel (cf. 42:4). The nation’s idolatry stifled its witness to the world (42:19; 18:1). Therefore, the teaching will go forth directly from Yahweh (cf. Is. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3) through his loyal Servant. They share in the same mission (cf. Jn. 10:30). But as the Servant seeks to establish Yahweh’s will, he encounters serious setbacks (Is. 50:4-11), and his mission ends in a death with the wicked (52:13-53:12). However, his interment (53:9) on Good Friday does not mean the end; he arises victorious on Easter (52:13; 53:12). The risen Servant sends forth his “servants” in mission. (CC)

Heaven and earth will pass away but the Lord’s kingdom will endure forever. All growth and development is to begin with “instruction” that Israel gets as to the big issues involved. (Leupold)

torah – This is the Pentateuch which includes both Law and Gospel.

mishpat – A verdict or sentence. In this case the word comprises both “justification” (God’s “justice – undeserved grace or salvation) and “sanctification,” a norm of behavior corresponding to God’s norm. God’s justice is salvation by grace through faith in the Christ’s death and resurrection.

light to the peoples. The servant is the light in 42:6; 49:6. (CSB)

God's Word and restoration are not restricted to Israel but will touch a wide range of nations. (TLSB)

The light kindled in Israel will throw its kindly beams for people the world over. (Leupold)

ore – Illumination like daylight or sun shine. Jesus is that light that is to be shared with all people. The light kindled for Israel's use will also throw light beams to people all over the world.

Isaiah 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles."

Isaiah 49:6 "he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

51:5 *righteousness draws near.* In the deliverance from exile. Ultimately, salvation through Christ will come to all nations. Righteousness is equivalent to salvation. (CSB)

He will powerfully divide the righteous from the wicked (cf Mt 25:31–46). (TLSB)

If Yahweh is committed to the restoration of his people, what will he do about the sin that precipitated Israel's apostasy, idolatry, and exile? He will commission Cyrus to conquer Israel's conqueror Babylon (Is. 47), but how will he save Israel? The Suffering Servant is Yahweh's answer. He embodies Yahweh's arm (53:1). "Righteousness" and "Salvation" come through this mighty "arm" (51:5). Through this loyal Servant, God restores Israel and brings enduring salvation also to the Gentiles. (CC)

The word righteousness is translated "victory," a possibility that cannot be reproduced in English. All this is spoken of in the perfect tense, for it all refers to things that have as good happened. (Leupold)

tsehdek – Legal equity and prosperity. This is forensic righteousness as declared by God and not earned by us. Ultimately it is the salvation which we have through Jesus.

Isaiah 46:13 "I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel."

arms. Symbolizes power. (CSB)

God's successful overall rule could hardly be described more simply and clearly than in the words "my arm." All issues of history lie in the hollow of God's hand. (Leupold)

zeroaw - It illustrates mighty power, strength and help for those who need it.

Exodus 6:6 "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.'"

Numbers 11:21-23, ²¹ But Moses said, “Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, ‘I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!’ ²² Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?” ²³ The LORD answered Moses, “Is the LORD’s arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you.”

coastlands. The coastlands and islands of the Mediterranean are probably intended. (CSB)

hope. Trust in or look expectantly. (CSB)

Ultimately these benefits will accrue to all nations. The nations themselves in the secrets of their heart wait for the time when they will have a share in these blessings. (Leupold)

51:6 *Lift ... to the heavens*. See 40:26. (CSB)

This is the third time in the chapter that Yahweh commands the captives to “look confidently” in faith (see also 51:1-2). He is repeating an earlier direction to Abram (Gen. 15:5). (CC)

Amazing, isn’t it! According to the *World Book Encyclopedia*, “with large telescopes astronomers can photograph over thirty billion stars. And we think there must be billions more beyond the reach of our most powerful telescopes.” Not only is He able to name each one but also brings out each one every night.

nawsaw – Lift to lofty place.

Isaiah 40:26 “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

vanish like smoke. Disturbances in the heavens characterize the day of the Lord. (CSB)

sky ... scroll ... starry host will fall.† Referred to in Mt 24:29 in connection with the second coming of Christ.). (CSB)

The Lord invites His people to consider things that seem unalterably fixed and sure – the heavens above and the earth beneath. Nothing appears to be more stable than these works of the Lord’s hands. But they are not among the things that endure to all eternity. (Leupold)

earth will wear out like a garment. See 24:4; Heb 1:10–11; cf. Isa 50:9. (CSB)

Neither creation nor the enemies of God’s people are eternal. The material world is transitory, but the Word of the Lord “will not pass away” (Mt 24:35; cf Mt 5:18). (TLSB)

The dwellers upon the earth will share in the same lot in the great judgment, perishing like swarms of gnats, in a merciless and total judgment, many though they may be at the time the judgment takes place. (Leupold)

my salvation - yeshooaw – To be saved from something or delivered and experience victory. (QV)

Yahweh's comments about the transitory nature of creation contrast with his everlasting salvation and righteousness. These gifts will never fail (Ps. 102:25-27), quoted in Heb. 1:10-12). If creation may appear to be stable and lasting, even more is Yahweh's plan to save Israel. Even if the heavens and earth dissipate, his love will never cease (cf. Jer. 31:35-36; Mk. 13:31). (CC)

will be forever.† See v. 8; 45:17. God will be faithful to all of his promises. The word of God will also endure forever (CSB)

Contrast is similar to that in Is 40:6–8. The salvation and righteousness of the Lord will never fail. (TLSB)

Another way of saying this is, “my victory shall never be annulled.” (Leupold)

God is faithful to all his promises. His word will not pass away, even though everything else will (Matthew 24:35).

Isaiah 45:17 “But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting.”

my righteousness - tsedawkaw – This is a rightness that has to do with justice, objectivity and virtue.

Will never be dismayed – The word fail is chathath and means to break down or be abolished. This phrase is saying that God's righteousness will not ever fail or be lost.

EPISTLE – Jude 20-25

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

20-23 A major shift and new section begin here. Jude resumes the theme begun in verse 1-4, where he exhorted the “beloved” (Jude 1, 3) to “contend for the faith one and for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The church militant must now engage in battle because ungodly invaders are promoting licentiousness and heresies from within (Jude 4). (CC p. 343)

To grasp Jude's message fully, a clear focus is needed on the theological progression in his epistle. Jude's message thus far is a powerful, impactful tapestry of the eschatological tension between the “already now” and the “not yet.” Jude's presentation of realized eschatology “already now” essentially refers to the salvation gifted to his readers through Baptism and their faith in Christ, and to the sure status of Christians as His rescued people. However, they have “not yet” been delivered from the evildoers currently at hand, the battles now in progress, and the crusades yet to be fought. Christians live under the cross in progress, and the crusades yet to be fought. Christians live under the cross and in this world, where affliction, hostility, and temptation surround them. (CC p. 343)

“Already” rescued and strengthened through the Word and the Sacraments of grace, Christians forge onward toward the final victory in which they have “not yet” fully participated. Despite their suffering

and oppression, they know that Christ has already won the war for them and that His tomb is empty. Jude presented the “already” and the “not yet” in Jude 5-19 through a barrage of images of OT evil archetypes already judged; those wicked exemplars correspond to the contemporary intruders, who are destined for similar future judgment. Jude thus illustrated to the beloved how the destruction of those ancient villains is a preview of the final judgment which will befall the impenitent infiltrators. The Law condemnation of the immoral heretics means Gospel for the beloved as Christ the great Warrior has destroyed and will destroy all enemies in His church. (CC p. 344)

20:20-25 The author of the Epistle of Jude introduces himself as the “brother of James” (v 1). This is likely an expression of modesty for a much more prominent familial connection; if, as is highly probable, the James he mentions is the author of the epistle by that name, and if, as widely believed, that James is the half brother of Jesus, it follows that Jude is also likely a son of Mary and Joseph and another half brother of our Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

This letter is addressed to the faithful, the ones who are kept by Christ in the faith (v 1). They are encouraged to fight the good fight for the faith (v 3) and persevere even in the midst of sufferings and persecutions, for the time is short (“the last time,” v 18). Jude clearly tells them to watch out, recognize, and fight against the godless who have even infiltrated the Church (v 4; 2 Pet 2:1). Few passages in Scripture are as graphic or as harsh in condemning enemies of the faith (vv 4–16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

20-21 Jude first gives an exhortation to each believer regarding that individual’s personal faith. Be built up in the faith. Remain in God’s love. Expect Christ’s mercy for eternal life. This vigilance is necessary as long as we live on earth in a sinful world. Therefore, faith can never be static. It is either growing or dying. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

The emphasis is on the believer and his faith in the midst of the last days. Build yourselves up upon your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

20 beloved. In contrast to the ungodly false teachers, about whom this letter speaks at length. (CSB)

building yourselves up – After Jude reminds the recipients of their status as “beloved” in Christ he proceeds to the first participial phrase: “building yourselves up by the means of your holy faith.” On the basis of the indicatives of divine love and mercy, Jude invites the readers to live thus in their redeemed identity as they “content for the faith” (Jude 3). While the spirit-less purveyors of the false doctrine are attempting to tear apart the church (Jude 19), Jude invites the Christians to build each other up. The imagery of construction envisions the church as the new temple, the place of God’s incarnational, merciful presence as He comes to his holy people in His Word and Sacraments. The plural reflexive pronoun, “yourselves,” has a corporate connotation, referring to the Christians’ mutual consolation with the Word as well as corporate gathering around the Word and the Lord’s Supper (Jude 12). (CC p. 345)

most holy faith. The Christian faith is set apart from the world’s unbelief. Such faith is not common to the world; it is holy. (TLSB)

Faith can refer to both the means for building and the foundation upon which Christ’s church is built. Perhaps Jude intends both possible nuances. It is important to note that verb “build up/upon,” assumes building upon something already present, a foundation already laid. If Jude employs “faith,” as the foundation already laid, the objective revelation centers upon Christ as that foundation. This corresponds to 1 Cor. 3:11 in the context of 1 Cor. 3:10-15. If Jude employs “faith,” as the means for building, this

emphasizes the efficacy of the prophetic and apostolic Gospel, whose cornerstone is Christ (Eph. 2:19-20). This would correspond to 1 Cor. 3:12-13 in the context of 1 Cor. 3:10-15). (CC pp. 345-346)

in the Holy Spirit. According to the Spirit's promptings and with the power of the Spirit (see Ro 8:26-27; Gal 4:6; Eph 6:18). (CSB)

Praying according to God's Word, which the Spirit inspired. (TLSB)

"Praying in the Holy Spirit." Continue to pray as one who has been brought into faith by the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

After the participial phrase about edification, Jude adds another participial phrase that draws the believers back to their Baptism through the remembrance of the Trinity (Mt. 28:19): "praying in the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit works through the means of grace to impart Christ to us (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:14). The Spirit also moves us to pray (Eph. 6:18) and gives us the content of prayer (Rom. 8:15-16, 26; Gal. 4:6). As we offer our petitions by the Spirit, we are led to utter prayers that confess who Christ is and what He has done for us (1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Jn. 4:2; cf. Lk. 2:25). (CC p. 346)

Since Jude focuses on the corporate sacramental setting in Jude 12, here he may also envision the context of congregational prayer. In contrast, the heretical intruders cannot pray in the Spirit, since they do not have the Spirit (Jude 19). As a result, their prayers, cannot lead anybody to Christ. (CC p. 347)

21 *Keep yourselves in the love of God.* God keeps believers in his love (see Ro 8:35-39), and enables them to keep themselves in his love. (CSB)

Guard against false teaching that leads away from the love of God in our Savior. (TLSB)

Jude continues to explicate how the beloved contend for the faith. Here we encounter the first imperative verb form: "keep yourselves in the love of God." The "love" refers to God's love for the readers, not their love for Him. This imperative links linguistically and theologically with Jude 1-2, where Jude declared that his Christian readers are already "beloved in God the Father"; note the passive voice of "beloved." Jude then invoked an overflowing abundance of God's love upon them: "may...love be multiplied to you" (Jude 2). Additionally, he designated the baptized and communicant believers as the undeserving recipients of God's love through the implicitly passive adjectival substantive, "beloved," in Jude 3, 17, 20, which summarizes their identity in Christ. (CC p. 347)

The verb "keep" is noteworthy, since like the vocabulary for love, this verb too has a history of usage throughout Jude. In Jude 1, Jude referred to his readers as called saints who are "kept" for Jesus Christ. In Jude 6, he soberly reminded them about the angels, "who did not keep" their God-given preeminent status: God "has kept them for severe judgment." Similarly in Jude 13, speaking about the stars who did not retain their God-given course in the heavens but wandered, Jude warns that hellish darkness "has been kept" for them. In this way, Jude encourages his Christian readers to live in their blessed kept-for-Christ status (Jude 1) and not be like the archetypal malefactors now imitated by the churchly imposters. They are outside of the God's love and consequently are kept for eternal condemnation. In contrast, by God's grace, the beloved are called as one kept in His love. (CC p. 348)

waiting for mercy – Here in Jude the specific object of expectation is "the mercy" of Jesus Christ. The "beloved" (Jude 1) have already received "mercy" according to Jude 2, where Jude prayed for God to multiply His abundant "mercy," plus He peace and love, upon them. Thus, "mercy" involves the eschatological tension of the "already now" verse the "not yet." Mercy is among the blessings "already now received by baptized believers in Christ because of His first advent. Still, a "not yet" aspect is that

“the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ” here refers to the final consummation of salvation to be implemented by Christ at His second coming (Lk. 1:76-78; Rom. 9:23; 2 Tim 1:16-18; 1 Peter 2:3-4). Christ will return as Judge and all the dead shall be raised bodily. The Lord will issue the final public pardon for His people. This mercy will result in eternal life for Jude’s readers and for all in Christ. The present creation will be destroyed, and they shall enter the new heaven and new earth, where righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:10-13). (CC pp. 348-349)

22–23 *those who doubt ... others.* Perhaps those who have come under the influence of the apostates. (CSB)

All Christians might have questions (e.g., David asked questions in the Ps). They should be treated with patience so that faith might overcome their doubts. (TLSB)

Now in Jude 22-23, Jude turns to contending for the faith in relation to those of the communion who, to one degree or another, have been deceived and seduced by the heretical intruders. Should the faithful beloved reconcile with them, ignore them, shun them, or hate them? Jude approaches the wayward members of the congregation with a pastoral heart of care in the hope of bringing them repentance and back into the communion. In the same breath, however, Jude jealously guard and protects the beloved from falling prey themselves to the seductive influence of evil. (CC p. 349)

23 *snatching them out of the fire.* Rescuing them from the verge of destruction. (CSB)

All who commit sin are urged to repent so that they might receive forgiveness, lest they remain in the fire and lose their faith.

Indeed, fire often represents divine judgment (e.g., Rev. 9:17-18; 16:8; 20:9), especially damnation to the eternal fire of hell. Consequently, for some outward members of the church, the flames of hell are now reaching up to their feet. Jude’s mention of fire also brings to remembrance the fiery destruction of the Sodomites because of their homosexuality (Jude 7) and how God’s angels snatched Lot from that conflagration by fire (Gen 19:16). Jude’s verb rendered as “snatch” denotes a forceful act of rescue. Like Lot, the person rescued might be reluctant or even hostile toward the rescuers before being persuaded to let himself be saved. (CC p. 350)

Therefore, Jude envisions a direct, vigorous intervention by the beloved to rescue the sinned congregation members who have fallen prey to the false teachings and carnal sins promoted by the intruders (e.g., Jude 8). Saving them from the fire requires stern calls for repentance, which, if heeded, are then followed by absolution, reinstatement, and readmission to the Supper to receive the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins and strengthening to eternal life. (CC p. 350)

mercy, mixed with fear. Even in showing mercy one may be trapped by the allurements of sin. (CSB)

Scripture exhorts God’s people to exhibit such kindness to the wayward (Mt. 18:15-20; cf. Romans 14). Thus, Jude still envisions hope for this group, although their situation is dire. When Jude says that these persons are “those who dispute,” he means that they have become more combative toward the faithful as their adhesion to the intruders has strengthened. If the previous verse refers to a separate group, the members sinned by the fire seem to be more passive in their stance, whereas these people are more confrontational, antagonistic, and bellicose. (CC p. 351)

Jude then qualifies the act of showing mercy to be “with fear.” The faithful must fear the influence of this group and act with appropriate caution, lest they also become stained by sin. Other interpreters suggest

that possible objects of “fear” are “God’s holiness” and “God’s/Christ’s coming judgment. Jude may intend a combination of all three. (CC p. 351)

garment stained by the flesh. The wicked are pictured as so corrupt that even their garments are polluted by their sinful nature. (CSB)

Correcting one another must be done with fear, because all Christians are sinners, attracted to sin. Sin is not to be toyed with or dallied in. Unrepented sin is like a stain on our robe of righteousness, which we have from Christ. Only His blood can make it white again with His forgiveness. (TLSB)

Jude clarifies this act of mercy and articulates the degree to which the disputers have become corrupted: “despising even the garment stained by sin.” Like the quote in Jude 9 and the picture in Jude 22, this imagery too comes from Zech. 3:1-5, where the high priest stands in soiled clothing as an indication of sin. As the high priest, he bears the corporate guilt of Israel and also is guilty of his own person sin. The Angel orders the removal of the soiled clothing and provides clean, new garments to portray the forgiveness of sin. Thus, Jude employs this image from Zechariah and joins it with the accusation in Jude 8 that the immoral heretics “defile flesh” to indicate the intruders’ corrupting effect on the congregation. (CC p. 351)

Even in this case of severe and contagious defilement, Jude still encourages the beloved to seek to bring such polluting people back to the communion of saints. Yet, Jude asserts extreme caution. This group has become so intertwined with licentious intruders that their garments have become soiled by sinful flesh. The “garment” here is a tunic, that is, an undergarment. Thus, it is in constant contact with the skin and is the first garment to become discolored and filthy from the flesh. Jude directs the beloved to despise this garment stained by sinful flesh. (CC p. 351)

17–23 Christians, who have the full salvation already delivered to them in Scripture, need not fall into deceptions. We have been warned about false teaching and the deception of sin that leads to death. Likewise, the Lord has taught us the path of righteousness by which His Spirit leads us in the Gospel of grace and peace. • Lord God, keep us in Your love and mercy in Christ until He comes to deliver us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life with You and Your Holy Spirit. Amen. (TLSB)

Doxology

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

24–25 After all the attention necessarily given in this letter to the ungodly and their works of darkness, Jude concludes his letter by focusing attention on God, who is fully able to keep those who put their trust in him. (CSB)

The climax of Jude’s letter is this doxological conclusion. Blameless and praising God, we stand in His presence. Left to our own devices we stumble. Without His forgiveness our sins make us unfit for His presence, but God is our Savior through Jesus Christ, our Lord. To God belong glory, majesty, strength, and power. Although we live in a sinful world during the time between Jesus’ fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation and its final manifestation, we live with full confidence that He will preserve us to the end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

This is a benediction for the faithful as they struggle to persevere in a sinful world and as they seek to carry out acts of mercy in a corrupt and dangerous setting. The view is toward the coming of Christ and everlasting life, for the time is short. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 4)

24 *who is able* – This verse is filled with words of comfort and jubilant exultation for the Christian readers. In the midst of concern among the beloved, Jude joyfully confesses the one who alone is able to meet their ultimate needs both now and at the end of time. The omnipotent God wields all power in heaven and on earth. Nothing can hinder His ability to rescue His beloved (cf. Rom. 8:31-39). Other doxologies begin with a similar confession about “him who is able.” (CC p. 360)

keep you from stumbling – Now Jude specifies that under the Lord’s care, they will not fall away from Christ and into the trap set by the intruders, and so suffer condemnation with them. The image of stumbling to indicate mortal danger for God’s people arises from the Psalms. (Ps. 121:3-8; 140:4; 141:9) (CC p. 360)

Only God could keep them in the one true faith by the power of His Word. (TLSB)

present...his glory – God is able “to present (you) in the presence of His glory as blameless with great exultation.” The expression “in the presence of His glory,” is a respectful Semitic circumlocution for God. Being in the glorious presence is a distinct tenet of the Christian hope for the Last Day, when the Son of Man will present His beloved as “blameless.” His church, the bride of Christ, has been rendered a pure virgin through the Sacrament of Baptism, “the washing of water with the Word” (Eph 5:26), so Christ may present the church to Himself as “glorious,” “not having a spot or stain or any of such things, but that she may be holy and “blameless” (Eph 5:27). (CC p. 361)

present you blameless – The word “blameless/without fault” has distinct liturgical connotations of an acceptable sacrificial offering free of defect. Because of the atoning sacrifice of the perfect unblemished Christ, baptized believers stand blameless before God. (CC p. 361)

“Blameless/without blemish” is another indication of the eschatological quality of the “already now” and “not yet” of the Christian hope. Although Christians are still encumbered by their sinful human nature and their lives filled with impurities, nevertheless, already now, on account of Christ, the sins of the beloved are not counted against them. Upon the return of Christ, they will be raised bodily to the incorruptible, and so, at the cusp of the eschaton, they will finally be freed from their original sin and all its effects. They will stand blameless before God’s glorious presence, unlike the heretical intruders, who will be raised to everlasting shame and torment. (CC p. 361)

with great joy – Finally, this blameless presentation of the beloved at the parousia will result in “great exultation.” Although we already have joy now in Christ (1 Peter 1:3-8), a yet greater joy awaits us. (CC p. 361)

25 *God our Savior* – Jude confesses God as “our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here Jude apparently distinguishes between “God” the Father and the “Savior” name the Son, “Jesus Christ.” Other verses that expressly refer to the “Father” and the “Savior” name the Son, Jesus Christ, as the one who is the “Savior” (Titus 1:4; 1 John 4:14). This verse is unique in declaring the Father as the Savior. However, His role as Savior only occurs through Jesus Christ, therefore this phraseology is reminiscent of John 3:16. Moreover other texts refer to the triune God as Savior (e.g., Lk. 1:47; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; see also Is. 45:15). (CC p. 362)

The heavenly Father, who saved us through Christ. (TLSB)

glory – “Glory”, conveying the highest honor and reputation, appears in most NT doxologies. It also occurs in 1 Chr. 29:11-12, which is a model for OT doxologies and a likely source for the wording found in the doxology of the Lord’s Prayer. The term has eschatological connotations, since the Son of Man will appear in glory at His second coming (Lk. 9:26; Titus 2:13). It also causes remembrance of the incarnational, gracious presence of God’s glory at the OT tabernacle and temple. (CC p. 362)

Praise for all that He has to save. (TLSB)

majesty – “Majesty,” associated with monarch, appears three times in the NT (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; Jude 25). In Hebrews, the term functions as a circumlocution for God, whose right hand Christ is now seated (Heb. 1:3; 8:1). (CC p. 363)

dominion – “Power” (kratos) is connected with God’s omnipotence and graciousness, as conveyed by His designation as “Him who is able” (Jude 24). This noun usually appears with other terms of honor when ascribed to God (e.g., 1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 1:6; 5:13). (CC p. 363)

The all-encompassing sphere of God’s rule over all that exists. (TLSB)

authority – “Authority,” referring to sovereignty as a ruler, also has connotations of grace, as it appears in the Great Commission. Already during His earthly ministry He had bestowed upon His apostles the “authority” to cast out demons and heal disease (Mt. 10:1). (CC p. 363)

now and forever – Jude’s sweeping time element includes past, the present, and future eternity. The threefold time element may result from Jud’s general proclivity for triads in his epistle. (CC p. 363)

amen – The concluding “amen” is a most glorious liturgical finish, a joyous response by the beloved in Christ. AS Jude likely intends his epistle to serve as a Scripture reading in the corporate worship service, the assembled congregation utters the “amen” to make this confession of their own. (CC p. 363)

24–25 Jude emphasizes that salvation is not based on our own reason or strength but is wholly the Father’s work in Christ. As the Lord grants you opportunity, share the message of salvation with boldness, for it truly comes from the Lord and He truly works through that testimony, leading those who repent to great joy. • Lord, grant me present joy in my service and everlasting joy in the glories of heaven You prepared for me through Christ Jesus. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Mark 13:24-37

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 in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

13:24-37 The eschatological section of Mark’s Gospel assigned for this day is the end of a longer discourse from Jesus given to his disciples after they left the temple. They remarked on the beautiful buildings and stones, which prompted Jesus to warn them of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Many try to use these verses to construct predictions of when Jesus’ return will be. Jesus answers the question of when, not by telling the disciples times or definitive signs to prove the date, but rather by telling them what to do when they encounter certain situations. When you hear . . . do not be alarmed (13:5–8). When they bring you to trial . . . do not be anxious (13:9–13). When you see . . . let those who are in Judea flee (13:14–23; C. S. Mann, *The Anchor Bible: Mark* [New York: Doubleday, 1986], 527). These do not

answer the question of when Jesus will return. Any effort to twist them to that purpose is futile. Rather, these describe the mountaintop in the foreground. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

These verses change context from the near events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem to the more distant events relating to the return of Christ, from the suffering of God's people to their ultimate vindication and victory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

13:24-31 The parallels are found at Matthew 24:29-35 and Luke 21:25-33

In verses 5-13 Jesus gives us a survey of all time from when he was speaking (Tuesday of Holy Week) till the end of the world; in verses 14-23 He speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish nation; in verses 24-37 He speaks of His parousia and the very end of the world. (Buls)

Concerning verses 24-31: Nestle Greek text makes this two paragraphs, the signs of the very end and the Parousia; 28-31, the admonitory lesson from the fig tree. Ylvisaker makes three paragraphs: 24-25, premonitions in nature; 26-27 the signs which shall attend the Lord's advent; 28-31, the time for the end. Beck makes verses 21-31 one section, entitled "Jesus is Come," with subparagraphs at 24, 28 and 30. That is worth studying. Very likely the false christs, false prophets, deceiving miracles and wonders refer to the end of the world, not the destruction of Jerusalem. (Buls)

Once again, the text is from Holy Week, probably Holy Tuesday, mere days before the grimmest consequence of the fall, that is, Christ's withering and death, which is to say, mere days before the coming of the world's impossible spring in him resurrected. Thus judgment is as counter-intuitively pregnant with hope as was Jesus' tomb. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:24-25 Juxtaposed to the false hopes which will mislead many of the people in the critical moment is the assurance that the period of suffering and distress will be followed by final redemption when the Son of Man will be manifested in power and glory. *In those days* has no determined temporal value. In verse 24 this phrase designates a period of subsequent to the days of tribulation described in verses 19-20, but the matter of chronological sequence is left imprecise. It is clear from the structure of the discourse that the parousia cannot take place until after all the preliminary events announced in verses 5-23 have occurred. They are the necessary precursors to the coming of the glorified Son of Man, yet in themselves they do not determine the time of that event. (Lane)

The striking of the sun and moon and stars in Israel's history is connected with the Lord humiliating the foreign "gods" the heathen trust (e.g., Joel 2-3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

"In those days" is used repeatedly to indicate the days just before the end (Jer 3:16; Joel 3:1). A qualitative difference can be detected between the events predicted in Mk 13:7-8 and those described here. The intensity of these events is greater, as the creation is shaken to its very foundations, and these occur only once, immediately before the end. The verses are a composite of Is 13:10; 34:4. Some commentators interpret these verses only symbolically, but there is no reason to doubt that the shaking of the heavenly bodies at the end of days will involve the actual collapse of the created order. See 2 Pet 3:10-11 for ramifications. The events will be so awesome in their glory and so devastating in their power that all attempts at description inevitably fall short. Cranfield's comment is helpful: "An event which we could neatly explain could hardly be the end" (*The Gospel According to St. Mark* [Cambridge, 1959] 407). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

As interesting as the details are, one must avoid speculation that leads away from Christian hope and loses itself in predictions of the end or in millennialist fervor. Such errors are all too common. The founder of

the Seventh Day Adventists, William Miller, calculated that the return of Christ would take place between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. Many pastors (the author included) received a mailing in 1988 from Edgar Whisenant, who declared September 1988, and then later 1989, as the time of Christ's return. See *The End Times: A Study on Eschatology and Millennialism* (CTCR report, 1989) for millennialism. Dr. Robert L. Rosin's development of Mt 25:31–46 (*Concordia Pulpit Resources* 3/4, pp. 37–39) provides the pastor with excellent guidelines for preparing end times pericopes. "When considering our coming, common inheritance, we need to think in terms of both eschatology and soteriology, linked logically as we think, and theologically as God speaks to us" (p. 37). (*Concordia Pulpit Resources* - Volume 4, Part 4)

Ylvisaker: "Jesus here speaks of the immediate premonitions in nature. Nature, both in heaven and on earth, shall pass through such an organic change that it must be obvious to everyone that the end is at hand. The forces of nature shall be transformed so thoroughly that it will be plainly apparent that the old order of things is in the process of dissolution." Then he quotes references from the OT. Lenski: "All that holds the heavenly bodies in their orbits and enables sun, moon, and stars to light the earth, shall give way. Thus the sun's light will be extinguished, the moon's radiance will disappear in the same instant, and the stars will come tumbling from their places. (Exegetical Notes – Bults)

13:24 but – "But" dissociates the destruction of Jerusalem from the end of the world. The disciples and the original readers of Mark could not have identified the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world because of what is said in verse 10 and verses 32–37. The destruction of Jerusalem, of course, was a reminder of the end of the world. "Day" in verse 19 is contrasted to this verse where "day" must have a much wider meaning because we are here dealing with the very end of the world. (Bults)

"But" (*alla*). Immediately after Christ's words about dreadful troubles (v 19), false christs (vv 21–22), and the necessity of the most strenuous vigilance (v 23), comes this "but." What follows is in essence very good news (as v 28 insists). Indeed, this "but" governs all that follows. (*Concordia Pulpit Resources* - Volume 16, Part 4)

in those days. A common OT expression having to do with the end time (see Jer 3:16, 18; 31:29; 33:15–16; Joel 3:1; Zec 8:23). (CSB)

The time period right before the end of the world.

"But in those days, after that tribulation [*tēn thlipsin ekeinēn*], the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light." The Lord is quoting himself from Isaiah 13, where the judgment of Babylon is likened to an uncreation of the creatures there. The Creator will himself so undo Babylon as to make it seem that it had never been. But this, which is poetry (and a taste of the world's end) regarding Babylon, will become reality at the world's judgment, when he who created the universe and continually sustained it, even in its fallen and cursed condition, will in fact uncreate it. (*Concordia Pulpit Resources* - Volume 16, Part 4)

Jeremiah 3:16 "In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "men will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made."

sun will be darkened – No ordinary eclipse. Chaotic, yet a sense of order because God is in control.

Undoing the fourth day of creation (Gen. 1:4) on the Last Day. (TLSB)

“Darkened, . . . will not give its light.” We are reminded of the visions of the Revelation, where the darkening of created light is a metaphor for the darkening of spiritual light by demonic powers, as a judgment from God on those who loved darkness rather than light. So, on the Last Day, Christ literally grants to those who suppressed the truth in unrighteousness the darkness they desired. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:25 The description in vv. 24–25 does not necessarily refer to a complete breakup of the universe. It was language commonly used to describe God’s awful judgment on a fallen world (see Isa 13:10; 24:21–23; 34:4; Eze 32:7–8; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Am 8:9). (CSB)

Cosmic signs of the end (cf Jl 2:10; 3:15). (TLSB)

stars will be falling – This does not mean that the universe will break up but it will be a sign of God’s awesome judgment.

Ylvisaker: Jesus here speaks of the immediate premonitions in nature. Nature, both in heaven and on earth, shall pass through such an organic change that is must be obvious to everyone that the end is at hand. The forces of nature shall be transformed so thoroughly that it will be plainly apparent that the old order of things is in the process of dissolution. (Buls)

Lenski: All that holds the heavenly bodies in their orbits and enables sun, moon, and stars to light the earth, shall give way. Thus the sun's light will be extinguished, the moon's radiance will disappear in the same instant, and the stars will come tumbling from their places. (Buls)

Kretzmann: Then there will be signs such as are entirely out of the usual course of events in nature; no ordinary eclipses which follow laws and rules framed by God, but a return to chaos . . . There will be a great concussion of the powers of the heavens. The entire universe will go out of joint. The hand of God's providence and government will be withdrawn, and will be dissolved into its component parts. (Buls)

Until then God has promised in Genesis 8:22: "As long as the earth stands, sowing and harvesting, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will not stop." (Beck's translation). Read Luke 17:22 for a comparison between the flood and the end of the world. The unbeliever scoffs at this, just as evolutionists scoff at the doctrine of creation. But Mark 13:31^a, a restatement of verses 24-25, is a warning to the unbeliever and a comfort to the believer. By the way, verses 24-25 and their parallels rule out any and all ideas of the millenium. (Buls)

Isaiah 13:10 “The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.”

Isaiah 34:4 “All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.”

“And the powers in the heavens will be shaken.” A difficult phrase. We might understand by this the powers and principalities in heavenly places, that is, demonic powers, shaken and, indeed, terrified, by the coming of Christ. That is by no means an unlikely interpretation, but, in this context of the collapse of the natural world, the phrase is probably better understood as speaking of the collapse of elemental powers, such as gravity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

2 Peter 3:10-11 “For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it”

13:26 *they will see* – optomahee – To gaze with eyes wide open and see Jesus’ full majesty. (QV)

Lenski: Here and in verse 27 'at that time' merely denotes succession, but almost instantaneous succession. (Buls)

Daniel 7:13 “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence”

Acts 1:9-11 “After He said this , He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

The verb *opsontai*, “[they] will see,” has no subject (NIV supplies “men”). The context suggests a universally observed event (also Acts 1:9–11; Dan 7:13). Questions arise. How can all see him from the surface of a globe? If the dead have been raised, where will all fit? Such questions are futile, since they apply our temporal circumstances to eternity. What is certain is that believers will lift up their heads (Lk 21:28) in joyful expectation at the sight of the Son of Man. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Son of Man. Beck: "Then people will see the Son of Man." By the way, this verse clearly speaks of the same incident as Daniel 7:13-14. This verse clearly says that the human nature of Christ will fully and brilliantly use all the power and glory of the divine nature. All will see Him thus. The adjective "all" goes with both nouns. "In clouds" is to be taken literally. This verse is a great comfort to the believer and a warning to the unbeliever. (Buls)

“And then *they* will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (emphasis added). Since *they* (implied by *opsontai*) must be opposed to *you*, *they* must refer to the pagan world. Of course, disciples as well will witness the appearing, but the appearing is no subjective event, perceived only by the faithful. Here is presented the shock of the naturally minded, seeing the reality that they have to this point avoided and denied. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“The Son of Man.” The Lord is quoting the title he gave himself in Daniel, Ezekiel, and other references. Certainly “the Son of Man” is a divine name, since it is the name of the Messiah, God-with-us. Yet it is the name that emphasizes the human nature of Jesus as the second Adam, the ultimate man, innocent and immortal, that is, man, by the wonder of God’s grace, in triumph. He who will appear is human flesh and blood, one of us and supreme, the one of us who, by the taking up of his humanity into the Godhead, is God, Creator, and Judge. It is the revelation of him who is also a creature (and the first of the new creation) that occasions and causes the end of this creation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Jesus often calls himself the Son of Man, but finally here the full eschatological implications are shown. “And behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (Dan 7:13–14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

Coming in clouds with great power and glory. A reference to Christ's second coming (see 8:38; 2 Th 1:6-10; Rev 19:11-16). (CSB)

"Coming in clouds." "He makes the clouds his chariot" (Ps 104:3 ESV) because he is Yahweh, coming to deliver his people. But he is also Yahweh the Son of Man, for here is a plain allusion to Daniel's night vision. It is an allusion and not a quotation because Daniel sees Christ's ascension, not his second coming; the direction is exactly reversed. At his ascension, Christ goes trailing clouds, as it were, from creation to heaven; at his return he comes from heaven, likewise trailing clouds into creation. The clouds that seem to roof this world simply mark the border crossing. Thus, the world is not roofed over at all, but wide open to (defenseless against?) the divine: To see the clouds is to see his ready chariot. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

"With great power and glory." These are not accoutrements adopted for his triumphal reentry. They are rather his divine attributes from his conception, veiled by the likeness of sinful flesh and not fully used in his state of humiliation, but unveiled in heaven and fully used since his ascension and session. They and we shall see him as he is. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Jesus returns with the Father's authority to judge the world. (TLSB)

13:27 *angels.* The angels are always represented as the mighty servants through whom Jesus exerts His will at the end of the world. (Lenski)

gather his elect. In the OT God is spoken of as gathering his scattered people (Dt 30:3-4; Isa 43:6; Jer 32:37; Eze 34:13; 36:24). (CSB)

"And then he will send out the angels." Note that the Son of Man will send out the angels; this man is Lord of glory. His use of angels demonstrates his magnificence as Creator of angels and humanity—not that angels (or human beings) are in any sense necessary to him, but that they reveal the overwhelming life, love, and wealth of one greater than Solomon in all his splendor. Note also his love for his elect, that glorious angels should be sent (as servants; remember the parable of the wedding feast) to summon his beloved to ecstasy. But then, we are God's children, whereas they are servant spirits, sent to serve salvation's heirs. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

"His" angels and "His" elect. It should go without saying that election will not take place then but only the gathering of the elect, both living and dead. Look at 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16. This verse rules out the millenium and the mass conversion of the Jews. Beck paraphrases the last part of the verse well: "From the north, south, east and west, and from one end of the world to the other." A very comforting passage. (Buls)

Jesus tells us that His purpose in coming is to gather the elect to Himself. That removes all fear of the judgment for us. No matter where we are or where our bodies or bones or dust or ashes may lie, the Lord's angels will find us and bring us to Him. (PBC)

1 Thessalonians 4:16,17, "¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

from the ends of the earth – The work of the angels is universal. The ancients used "from the four winds" for the entire world. God's angels will not overlook anyone. See also 1 Thess. 4:16, where the

role of the archangel is included. This verse fulfills Mark 8:38, but emphasizes God's care for the faithful. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

“And gather his elect.” The subject of the sentence remains Jesus. He gathers his elect. How intimate and personal is the connection between the waiting believers and the coming Lord! And as his elect whom he himself chose before time, called in time, and now gathers by his angels at time's end, how utterly certain (despite the tribulation mentioned just before) is their destiny! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“From the four winds, from the ends of the earth.” That is, from all over the globe; none are forgotten. We are reminded of the Great Commission: the saving word has gone out from Zion to all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Here is the fruit of what has been planted. Here he who went out weeping, bearing precious seed, returns rejoicing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“To the ends of heaven.” This might allude to the spirits of the just who will return from heaven with Christ for their resurrection. But the parallels in Deut 30:4 and Neh 1:9 make it plain that the phrase means “to the ends of the skies” or “to the farthest horizons.” As it stands, then, this gathering “from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven” vividly pictures the air, earth, and sky thronged with the redeemed, raised and caught up to meet their Lord as the cosmos yields the purpose for which it was made. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Mark 8:38 “if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.”

1 Thessalonians 4:16 “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

13:24–27 Jesus will return on the Last Day to judge all humanity, fulfilling OT prophecy and His own predictions. No one will enter the kingdom of God by works, nor will any mere religion save anyone. Because Jesus died and rose for us and because the Holy Spirit created and sustained saving faith in His people, we can be sure of our salvation no matter how fearsome the Last Day may be. • Set my heart, O Savior, on the life and hope above, so that shadows of this world may not darken my sight. Amen. (TLSB)

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

28 “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

13:28-29 *tauta*, “these things,” the signs of vv 3–23. These verses interpret what it means when these frightening signs appear. When you see these things happen, they are actually like the fig tree pushing forth its leaves. As those buds are a sure sign summer is near, so the signs show that “he is near, at the very gates” (v 29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part)

13:28 *the fig tree*. The fig tree, common in the Holy Land, begins to swell along the stem before its leaves start to bud, alerting observers to the coming of summer, the joyous and fruitful time. Likewise, the signs are not intended to frighten Christians, but to heighten our anticipation and motivate continued faithfulness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

“From the fig tree learn its lesson.” A critical verse, which, as suggested above, insists on the evangelical nature of this passage. The disciples have just learned a lesson from a fig tree, namely, that that which is fruitless will be destroyed. In this context of the world’s end, we might expect, then, such a lesson of Law as this: “When you see its leaves wither, you know that winter is near.” But on the contrary (and perhaps to the disciples’ surprise), the lesson is purest Gospel. For the world’s end is, above all, the new world’s beginning. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“As soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.” Far from auguring the winter of judgment, for Christ’s disciples, the collapse of the universe is the herald of spring, or, rather (and how much better!), of summer, an even sweeter season of both greenness and fruit. The restoration of all things is near; the better Eden is near, as is the tree of life bearing fruit with its healing leaves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

We must remember that God does not look at time the way we do. “For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that just has gone by, or like a watch in the night” (Ps. 90:4). From the time the apostles took the gospel out into the world to the destruction of Jerusalem, to the growth of the church, to its persecution from within and without, to the end of all things is one chapter in God’s sight, the final chapter. (PBC)

Assuming that Jesus gave His this instruction just before the Passover, the fig tree would be in the condition described in the parable, its branches tender, its leaves sprouting. By calling the disciples to observe properly what was immediately at hand Jesus reinforced His exhortation to observe what was happening in Jerusalem, and Judea to recognize its significance. (Lane)

Perhaps Jesus stood near a fig tree. Because these trees produce two crops each year, they became proverbial of the seasons. Unlike many tree in Israel, the fig sheds its leaves each fall. New leaves appear relatively late in spring and indicate that warm weather is about to arrive. (TLSB)

The two conditional relative clauses introduced by "whenever" are clearly present general: "Whenever the branch . . . you always realize." "Whenever you see these things happening . . . always realize." Each spring when these things happen, people always realize that summer is near. Each time when Christians see signs, they always must realize that the end is near. He is not speaking of one spring and a few signs. He is speaking of something which is constant in life. The grammars and commentaries fail to point this out. (Buls)

To interpret this verse of the Jews only, the conversion of the Jews, is absurd. The fig-tree was very common in Palestine. It is purely an illustration of spring. Luke, who adds: "and of all the trees" is writing for a larger audience, including Gentiles. The idea is precisely the same. (Buls)

Point of comparison: clear signs alert us as to what is coming. It is implied here, and clearly stated in Luke, that the signs are so clear that no one need tell us what they mean, because they are constantly happening. Even a child understands that. Jesus credits the reader with the intelligence to know that "these things" refers to any and all signs in nature, politics, the family, society and even in the church. Signs are all those things over which we have no control: wars, rumors of war, controversies, inflation, the weather, troubles in families, death, eclipses, etc. The Christian is constantly being reminded by "all." The meaning is plain, He is near, the end is near, He is right at the door. (Buls)

13:29 *these things*. The signs listed in vv. 5–23 precede the destruction of Jerusalem and/or the end of the age. (CSB)

The fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. Cf vv 14–23. (TLSB)

“These things . . . he is near.” “These things” are the darkening of the sun and moon, the rain of stars, and the shaking of natural law: When you see these things, they are to be for you like the tender branch and the new leaves, for “summer is near” parallels “he is near.” These things are the evidence of his nearness; he who is the summer and who brings summer to us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

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The signs are not intended to frighten Christians, but to heighten our anticipation and motivate continued faithfulness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

it. Probably a reference to the second coming of Christ (see Lk 21:31 and NIV text note on Mt 24:33). (CSB)

This means the fulfillment of the prophecy of v 2. (TLSB)

at the very gates – The application of the parable in this verse places the accent on proximity more vigorously. The catastrophe of sacrilege which will profane the Temple (verse 14) will enable the disciples to know that the destruction of the Temple is imminent in the same manner that the coming of summer is imminent to the moment when the fig tree covers itself with leaves. (Lane)

“At the very gates.” The universe shakes as gates might shake at the knocking of a heavy fist, for, as noted above, it is his very approach in his unveiled great power and glory that occasions and causes earth’s collapse. For “these things” are different in kind from the other signs of his coming. Other signs point to his appearing as the beginning of birth pangs, but with these things comes the birth itself of the new creation. They not only point to but are the evidence of his proximity, from whose face heaven and earth will flee away, whose very presence will destroy the unbelieving world (the ESV glosses 2 Thess 1:9), by whose appearing we shall be changed, for we shall see him as he is. One and the same parousia accomplishes all, as a high wind might level dead trees, but merely prunes living trees of their dead growth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Thus, when we see the world ending, we are to know that “he stands behind our wall, . . . looking through the lattice. . . . [Saying,] ‘Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away, for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come’ ” (Song 2:9–12); that is, that the wedding supper of the Lamb is here. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:30 *truly I say to you* – “Truly, I say to you.” This solemn phrase demands that we take what follows quite literally and disallows one interpretation of “generation” “This generation” (*hē genea autē*). How shall we interpret this? Some suggest that we understand the word *generation* in a common English use, meaning “the life span of those now living.” Since Jerusalem was destroyed within the life span of those then living, these interpreters would see the fulfillment of Christ’s words in that destruction, Jerusalem’s fall being understood (rightly) as a sign and symbol of the world’s end. But Christ says, “all these things” must take place and this, coupled with the solemn “truly, I say to you” that introduces the promise, demands not a typical but a literal fulfillment. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

"I tell you the truth," always used in the Gospels of a solemn noteworthy assertion, plainly indicating Jesus' divinity. Note the very strong expression meaning: "Most certainly not." "Generation" denotes a certain *kind* not a span of time. Beck: "These people will not pass away till all this happens." (Buls)

generation. If the term is understood as a normal life span, it may refer either to the generation in which Jesus lived while on earth or to the generation living when these signs begin to occur (see note on Lk 21:32). (CSB)

Within one generation – c 40 years – the temple would lie in ruins. (TLSB)

“This generation” is troublesome. Cranfield (p. 409) suggests three broad approaches: (1) the primitive church read into Jesus’ teaching apocalyptic ideas that were alien to it; (2) Jesus was mistaken; or (3) a deeper theological understanding is required. After rejecting (1) and (2), what can be done with (3)? One line of reasoning assumes the difficulty lies with “this generation.” Possible meanings include (a) Jesus’ contemporaries; (b) mankind in general; (c) the Jewish people; (d) disciples and followers of Jesus; and (e) the unbelieving generation that demanded a sigh; the same phrase is Mark 8:12. Lenski builds a case for (e). In the OT the Hebrew word for “generation” can indicate a class of men distinguished by a certain moral or spiritual character. Thus God is ‘in the generation of the righteous’ (Ps. 14:5)’ (R. Laird Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the OT* [Chicago: Moody, 1981 p. 186] (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

Others understand *generation* in a common Hebrew use, meaning “a kind or race of persons,” and apply it to unbelieving humanity in general or to unbelieving Jews in particular. If the latter, then quite apart from the ineluctably anti-Semitic tone, this interpretation would suggest (as the millennialists would have it) that the continued survival of an ethnically Jewish people is in itself more significant than the survival of any other ancient and displaced peoples, as the Romans or the Armenians, that is, as though “God’s Israel” were any other than the Jewish-Gentile Church. But in either case, whether we understand “this generation” to be all unbelievers or Jewish unbelievers (as if Christ were merely telling his disciples, “You will have opposition until the end”—which we already knew from the preceding pericope), the only promise in the promise would be, “I will destroy all unbelievers when I come.” Of course, this is true, but jarringly out of place given the brightly evangelical context, especially of the verses immediately preceding and following. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

It seems far better to understand “this generation” as speaking of the generation to whom he was speaking: “this generation” right here, namely, his disciples, the kind of persons who belong to him, the race generated by the Holy Ghost, who are also themselves the new growth, the fragrance of life, that

signals summer's approach, for they are children of the day (even before the day dawns) and, in their spirits, already a new creation (before the new creation comes), the resurrection of whose spirits anticipates their bodies' resurrection, and whose faith, seeking another country, already lays claim to the world they will inherit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“This generation will not pass away” is paralleled by “my words will not pass away” (v 31). In both instances, what will not pass away is good. Here is Gospel. The gates of hell will not prevail against this generation. His words, which generate it, will produce their harvest, and it will never perish, nor can anyone pluck it out of his hand. It will be here to be harvested when he appears, and the Son of Man will, in fact, find faith on earth when he comes. And until he comes, this generation will itself be a sign of and witness to his coming. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Ylvisaker: Forced constructions are unnecessary if we accept the word in its literal sense, the generation of the Jews, the Jewish nation. (Buls)

Lenski: This type of Jews will continue to the very Parousia. It has not 'passed away' to this very day. The voice of Jewish rejection of Jesus as the Christ is as loud and vicious as ever: 'He is not the Messiah, not the Son of God!' Here, therefore, is Jesus' own answer to those who expect a final national conversion of the Jews either with or without the fiction of a millenium. (Buls)

Kretzmann: This people, the nation that had rejected Him, should not cease to be a distinct race of people, separate from all the rest, until Christ's coming in glory would take place. They should remain as a standing testimony and proof of the truthfulness of Christ's words. (Buls)

Hendriksen: The expression 'all this' covers the events predicted for the entire dispensation, including even the final tribulation and the Lord's glorious return. (Buls)

A second line of reasoning assumes the difficulty is in “all these things.” The reference could be to (a) the destruction of the temple 40 years late in A.D. 70; (b) Christ's passion and resurrection ; or (c) the start of all the signs, but necessarily the end itself. Cranfield (p. 409) opts for (c). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

This clearly designates the contemporaries of Jesus. Jesus solemnly affirms that the generation contemporary with His disciples will witness the fulfillment of His prophetic word, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dismantling of the Temple. (Lane)

Since “generation” (*genea*) may be understood either literally or symbolically, this verse has had many interpretations. The context clarifies. The key to understanding v 30 is its shared use of *tauta* (“these things”) from v 29. V 29 uses *tauta* in context of the parable of the fig tree. There it refers to the observations of the budding fig leaves. The budding leaves are a sign that summer is soon to follow. So the *tauta* of v 29 refers to the troubles that will befall believers whom Jesus describes in vv 3–23. The *tauta* of v 30 refers to those same troubles from the first part of the chapter, because it would be impossible for *tauta* to refer to the final consummation. If *tauta* meant the consummation of all things, it could not be the sign that the consummation is sure to come. This is verified by Jesus' clear rejection of a definable time frame in vv 32–36 (Larry W. Hurtado, *New International Biblical Commentary: Mark* [Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1989], 223). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

13:31 *my word will never pass away* – This relates also to Jesus' teachings which are going to be good for all time. We can always depend on God's Word.

Heaven.” That is, the skies and, as we should say, space. “Heaven and earth will pass away,” with all sin, sorrow, and death. Christ urges his disciples not to be afraid, but rather to lift up their heads as their redemption draws near. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“My words.” That is, the words of Yahweh, by which the worlds were made and are upheld, by which the present earth is reserved for fire, by which the paradise ahead will arise, and by which his elect are chosen, called, sanctified, and kept till the appearing of the salvation that is about to be revealed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

The central climax: while everything else is fleeting and temporary, Jesus’ Word and promises are everlasting. Christians can be confident, because their vindication is promised and sure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

Isaiah 40:8 states that the Word of God remains forever. By making the reference personal, Jesus identifies His words with God’s. This is best understood as referring to all of His teaching (cf. Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17; Ps. 119:89; Is. 55:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 4)

The declaration of verse 30 is strengthened by the assertion which follows. Verse 31 has its background in the OT where the enduring quality of God and His Word is contrasted with the only apparent durability of the created universe (cf. Ps. 102:25-27; Is 40:6-8; 51:6). While heaven and earth will be cataclysmically destroyed, Jesus’ word is established forever. This claim of high dignity for Jesus’ words implies a Christological affirmation: what is said of God in the OT may be equally affirmed of Jesus and His word. The prophecy on Olivet will surely come to pass. (Lane)

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

The Word of God, which spoke creation into being, will last longer than creation. It is eternal. (TLSB)

The Day and Hour Unknown

32 “But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. 35 Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— 36 lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake.”

The gospel of Mark presents the mission, ministry, and message of Jesus Christ anticipating that the Holy Spirit will lead the reader to conclude that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Savior, Redeemer, and Lord. This is, of course, the ultimate purpose of all Scripture. God would have all people acknowledge their sinfulness and accountability to God according to the law. But more than that, God desires that all people be brought to saving faith in his Son, the God-Man Jesus Christ, through the gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The text points to the face-to-face encounter of the reader with the Lord, whether it be at the Second Coming of Christ or at death prior to the Second Coming. For the unbeliever, the words of the text are a

call to repentance. For the believer, they are an exhortation to continual repentance and preparation for the day when he or she will meet the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The Nestle-Aland text¹ treats Mark 13:33–37 as a unit. Vv 33–34 are separated by a wider space than the other verses in the unit, indicating that v 33 introduces the theme of the section while vv 34–37 expand on the theme. The UBS text² and the NIV include v 32 as part of the unit. In the original Greek autograph, the verses and sections would not have been separated at all; the divisions in Nestle-Aland and UBS are modern interpretations. Whether Mark intended v 32 to be a part of the unit or not, it does provide information that is helpful in interpreting the text. Jesus informs his hearers that the exact time of his Second Coming is known only to the Father and not to the angels or the Son (according to his human nature). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The evangelist Mark tells the story of Jesus with machine-gun speed and cutting poignancy. The passages at hand are loaded with imperatives for all generations of Christ's followers. On the back side of this text, false compassion for the poor (14:4-9) leads Jesus to remind His followers that the true worship of God is primary to any God-pleasing acts of compassion. In the text the disciples wonder when the temple will be destroyed, but Jesus answers them with regard to His own return (13:21, 26). Sadly, when the disciples are called upon to keep a watch in the next chapter (14:34, 38), they are unable and, therefore, not prepared for the events of Christ's passion that soon come. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

In Mark 13, when a disciple admires Jerusalem's magnificent temple, Jesus predicts destruction. Shocked like those who saw its first destruction centuries ago, Peter, James, John, and Andrew ask the question: When will it happen, and how will we know before it happens (v 4)? Then Jesus describes Christian pilgrimage in a sinful world, the destruction of the temple, and the coming of the end. He sums up the disturbing predictions with the pronouncement, "This generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (v 30 ESV), while promising that his words remain forever. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

After stating the signs belonging to these three kinds of events, Jesus answers the question "When?" "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (v 32 ESV). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Asserting that the disciples, or any future believer, would not discern the time of his coming by the events that must occur, Jesus calls disciples to a life of faith in the certain expectation of his return. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:32-37 The four imperatives in the text have to do with attentiveness and watchfulness. The first admonition in v 33, (*blepete*, literally, "Keep watching" (NIV: "Be on guard"; RSV: "take heed")) occurs throughout Mark's gospel and is translated in different ways in Mk 4:24; 8:15; 12:38, coming to a climax in chapters 13 and 14. Here Jesus is preparing his disciples for the changes that would come with his imminent crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension (Mk 13:5, 9, 23, 33, 35,37; 14:34, 38). Synoptic parallels are found in Mt 24:36–44; 25:13; Lk 21:34–36. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Blepete (v 33), together with *agrupneite* (vv 33) and *grēngoreite* (vv. 35, 37), all bear the sense of being on the lookout, perceptive, on guard, and watchful. The present active imperatives denote continuing action rather than a one-time event. If these imperatives are to be something more than demands of the Law, one must press them further. To what object are we being alerted? For what does one watch? When it is seen, will we recognize it? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Gospel light dawns on those questions as one considers Mt 24:4, 26; Lk 8:18; 21:8; Acts 13:40; 20:31; 1 Cor 8:9; 10:18; 16:10; 2 Cor 10:7; Gal 5:15; Eph 5:15; 6:18; Phil 3:2; Col 2:8; Heb 3:12; 12:25; 13:17; 2 In 1:8; and Rev 3:2. For the most part, those passages urge attentiveness to the content of faith (*fides quae*) so that the believer's faith (*fides qua*) has its readiness in Christ. Faith is the sum of its contents: Christ. To keep watch means to be attentive to the specifics which Christ breathes into our thoughts, words, and deeds—which is the real intent behind watching one's doctrine (1 Tim 4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

The force of these imperatives is not an admonition to strain one's neck to see into the future. Rather, it is an encouragement to look diligently into the Word, which will never pass away (Mk 13:31). One who watches for Christ there is ready. Present action and future bliss will surely follow. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

Thus we must take note that the Gospel in the narrow sense, God's work for humankind in Christ, is not explicit in this pericope. The Gospel is implicit in the object for which one watches: Jesus Christ as he comes in his words of Spirit and life. The Christian congregation must not hear merely the admonition to watch, but must be assured that their readiness is in Christ. Luther illustrates this admirably in his exposition of Ps 127:1b, "Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain" (Luther's Works 45:328–31). He notes that "one of two things must necessarily follow when we rely on our own watchfulness: either arrogance or worry." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 4)

13:32 *No one knows.* A map of the future would be a hindrance, not a help, to faith. Certain signs have been given, but not for the purpose of making detailed, sequential predictions. (CSB)

The verse begins with a strong adversative conjunction, meaning "but" or "however." Up to this point Jesus had said much about the many signs which would precede the end of the world. Christians can read those signs. But they don't know the time of the end and Christ's appearing. Here Jesus is limiting His thoughts on knowledge of that day and hour. (Buls)

"Hour" is the Greek word for the smallest measurement of time. Actually, it is less than our English word "hour." It means "the specific time within a day." "No human being" is absolute. Note that the text reads "knows." There are two types of knowing. Look at the two usages at Matthew 24:43.

There "know" means "realize" on the basis of what Jesus had said. It denotes bestowed knowledge. But "know" here means inherent knowledge, to know on one's own. (Buls)

Back to Mark 13:32. No one knows on his own. And the context clearly means that no one is going to tell him either. Note "no-not-nor." Of our ten translations only RSV and NIV translate "not even-nor-but only." These Notes prefer NEB: "not even-not even-only." (Buls)

This verse answers the original twofold question: When will this occur, and how can the time of the event be predicted (v 4)? Christ does not speak about the temple in vv 32–36, but about the parousia, *that day* (*tēs hēmeras ekeinēs*). Our Lord refers to the great eschatological event of his return (Joel 3:18; Amos 8:3, 9, 13; Micah 4:6; Zeph 1:14–18; 3:16; Zech 9:16; Mt 25:13 [the day]; Jn 6:40 [the Last Day]; 1 Cor 5:5 and 2 Pet 3:10 [the day of the Lord]; Rev 16:14 [the great day]). He also addresses the possibility of recognizing the specific time of that day ("the hour," *tēs hōras*). "No one knows," *oudeis oiden* (perfect active indicative). From the past continuing to the present moment, the faithful, the angels beholding the Father, and the Son do not know. He corrects the fascination of those attempting to date Christ's return by correlating predictive prophecy and current events. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Jesus speaks here as a man. In His state of humility, Jesus did not always speak from His divine power or foreknowledge. (TLSB)

that hour. An OT expression for the day of the Lord's appearance (Am 8:3, 9, 13; 9:11; Mic 4:6; 5:10; 7:11), referring to the coming of the Son of Man (v. 26). (CSB)

tēs ēmeras ekeinēs, "that day," recalls similar Old Testament promises of a future manifestation of God redeeming his people (e.g., Amos 9:11–15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

angels. Hendricksen: The angels, though intimately associated with the events pertaining the second coming (Matthew 13:41; 24:31; Revelation 14:19), do not know the day nor the hour. (Buls)

"In heaven" is adjectival, telling us what kind of angels, not adverbial, telling us where they are. It means "the heavenly angels" or "the holy angels." What really surprises us here is that the Son does not know the day or the precise time. The point, of course, is that if the holy angels and the Son do not know, how can anyone else, any other human being; possibly know? Read Matthew 24:44. The Son of Man will come at a moment when NOBODY is expecting Him. (Buls)

But how can it be said that the Son, which indicates Jesus' divinity (the term), does not know? We quote a passage from Pieper, CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS, vol. II, p. 163: (Buls)

Alongside this divine knowledge of Christ, which in His state of humiliation He had according to His human nature, Scripture ascribes to Him limited knowledge (Luke 2:52; Mark 13:32). It predicates of Him, according to His human nature, a two-fold knowledge: the knowledge communicated by the divine nature to the human nature by virtue of the personal union, and the knowledge peculiar to the human nature as its natural essential attribute. The former is infinite while the latter is finite and capable of growth. (Buls)

And on page 164:

But how could there exist in one and the same Person both limited knowledge and divine omniscience? In the same way as there was in one and the same Person both omnipotence and limited power, indeed feebleness and death. As divine omnipotence, so also divine omniscience did not always become operative in the human nature; it was active only so far as it was necessary for the performance of Christ's office. Divine omniscience, for example, did not become functional with regard to the day and hour of the end of the world, since the Day of Judgment is not to be published upon earth, but, according to God's plan, is to remain hidden from men. (Buls)

For other statements on this same mystery, read Pieper, vol. II, pages 146, 207, and 285. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: Not for a moment did He cease to be God. He did not empty Himself of a single divine attribute, albeit these attributes were not employed. In the state of His humiliation He was the servant of God to effect our salvation, and as such He has never used His divine glory to glorify Himself, but always in obedience to His Father's will, and in the service of His office. The work of His calling set up a limitation in the use of the divine attributes which had been communicated to His true nature. This is true of His omnipotence, as also of His omniscience. But it is not a part of His office to know the hour for the end of the world. This is a part of the Father's world-dominion. (Buls)

And we must remember that Jesus is here speaking from the point of view of His humiliation. Jesus speaks in this verse of *The Son* and *The Father*. Both are true God, two persons in the same divine

essence. He does not say "My Father" or "Your Father." He is stressing the divinity of both the Father and Himself, and yet, according to His humanity He does not know the day or the moment of His second coming. (Buls)

Just one more thought: Read Luke 10:22 in Greek. There "my" denotes Jesus' human nature. All things have been given to Jesus' human nature by the Father. Therefore, the human nature of Christ "knows" the Father. At Luke 10:22 a form of "know" (bestowed knowledge) is used. But here, in Mark 13:32, a form of (inherent knowledge) is used. Implicit in this verse is the fact that Jesus became a human being just like me except that He was sinless. We forget too easily the He is *HUMAN* and that He is the most attractive human being who ever lived. (Buls)

Mark 13:32 rules out each and every attempt on the part of human beings to predict a day, or time of day, when Christ will come again. People who claim to be able to predict this, claim to know more than the God-man did in His state of humiliation. They are victims of self-delusion and anyone who follows them is likewise deluded. (Buls)

nor the Son.† While on earth, in his state of humiliation, Jesus did not normally use his divine wisdom (cf. Php 2:6–11). (CSB)

Luke 12:40, "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

1 Thessalonians 5:2, "for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

Revelation 16:15, "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

only the Father – God knows His plans and reveals what He chooses to whom He chooses. (TLSB)

13:33-37 These verses employ the literary device of *inclusio*. The passage both begins and ends with similar words and ideas. (Other biblical examples include the Hebrew of Is 53:6 and Ps 134.) V 33 begins with imperatives which are synonyms of the imperative concluding v 37. This observation would support the arrangement of the Nestle-Aland text over that of the UBS text. The use of four imperative forms of three different verbs in vv 33–37 emphasizes the urgency of the call to watchfulness and preparation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Jesus spoke the words of our text during Holy Week. It was Passover time. Crowds filled Jerusalem. Jesus spent many hours teaching, almost continuously confronting the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees (see Matthew 23). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

Jesus and his disciples withdrew to the relative peace and quiet of the western slope of the Mount of Olives, with its full view of the city and the temple. The disciples took in the scene admiringly. Jesus used this setting for an eschatological address. The Temple would be totally destroyed (except for the Wailing Wall, which was not part of the temple proper, but a supporting wall of the outer courtyard). He tells of fear-filled times. The suffering will become so extreme that God's people will plead, "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down" (Is 64:1) to put an end to these evils. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

Jesus gives a sweeping view of the New Testament age, pointing to the end of earthly time and the beginning of the eternal state. This world is rocking along toward its determined conclusion. When will

that be? Most of the chapter is Jesus' answer to the disciples' question in v 4. No one knows, save the Father. He set the time; nothing can hurry or postpone it. No one can trigger or foretell it. But it will come, with absolute devastation (2 Peter 3). Therefore, watch! Be prepared! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

Mark 13 is the longest uninterrupted speech, and the only extended discourse by Jesus recorded by Mark. The pivotal chapter serves as the bridge between Jesus' public ministry (Mark 1–12) and the narrative of his passion (14–16). It is a farewell discourse in which Jesus prepares his disciples for the period of suffering and confusion that will ensue before his return in glory. The recurring theme is that the disciples are ever to remain prepared for the end. They must not be deceived into thinking prematurely that the end has already come (vv 5–8), nor be overcome with despair at the woes they will endure (vv 9–27), nor be lulled into complacent slumber by the duration of time before his return (vv 28–37). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

Jesus describes the signs of the end. From our perspective, the destruction of the temple was accomplished long ago (A.D. 70), but Jesus cautions us not to jump to the conclusion that the end has already come (v 8). Most of the signs have been visible throughout history, though to varying degrees in different periods and locations, and they are likely to continue until the end. Some, like persecution, will intensify further before the final state. The message of all the signs is not when the end will come, but that the end will come. "Vigilance rather than calculation is required of the disciples and of the Church" (William Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974] 448). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

13:33 *be on guard be alert* –A number of words relay a sense of urgency in this text. There are two of them in this verse. *Blepete* is translated "look" or "watch!" is also used in vv 5, 9, 23. This term is used as well in 12:38, which may be read as the beginning of the entire discourse. *agrupneite*, literally "chase sleep away," is translated as "be alert." These words, as well as the duplication of thought from the previous verses, set the tone of urgency which this text carries. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

"Take heed, look out, beware, stop and think!" It's like a red traffic light that makes us stop and think. It occurs at Mark 13:5,9,23. Read those verses. In verse 5 it is a warning not to follow the many false christs who will come in Christ's name. In verse 9 it is a warning not to be offended when persecution, suffering for Jesus' sake, comes. In verse 23 it is a warning not to believe in the false christs and false prophets who will perform miracles and wonders which are so impressive that, if possible, they mislead even the elect. Here in verse 33 it is a warning not to fall victim to spiritual stupor. (Buls)

"Be alert!" literally means "stay awake at all times." Many think that the variant "and always pray" is textual. If not textual, it is implicit. Here read Matthew 25:13-15; Luke 19:12ff; Luke 21:36; Ephesians 6:18. Many other passages could be cited. But the last sentence in Mark 13:33 gives the reason for the two present imperatives.(Buls)

"You" introduces an explanatory clause. Jesus is concerned about **YOU**, plural. You don't know, nor will anyone, not even God, tell you. "What that time will come" introduces an indirect question. People constantly ask "When will the exact time be?" Jesus says: "You don't know." NASB translates "the appointed time." NEB has "the moment." The fact that the "time" is absolutely unknown implies the deep sinfulness of human nature. Even the most devout Christian would likely become lax if he would know the time. The fact that the "time" is unknown is for our good. It is not a liability. (Buls)

By the way, this text is not about justification but about sanctification. I am not responsible for my justification, for that is an accomplished fact. When Jesus says "watch and pray", He is not saying: "Save yourself" for that has already been done. Faith in the atonement does not mean that I cling to Him but that He has me safely in His hand. John 10:28; Romans 8:38,39. I needn't worry about or doubt that. But, sanctification makes me responsible for myself, under God, Who gives me all needed strength through the means of grace to be faithful. Even the watching and the staying awake is a gift of God. Faith in Christ makes me spiritually alive. I am a new creature. The Gospel gives me Christian freedom. It does not allow me to live according to the flesh. Now the Law says to me: "Love thy neighbor as thyself" Galatians 5:13-14. Someone has said that sanctification means to take justification seriously. (Buls)

The critical apparatuses in both Nestle-Aland and UBS note a variant addition which is included in a footnote in the NIV and in the text of the NKJV: "Watch! Stay awake *and pray!*" Some scholars maintain that if the words "and pray" were original, they would not have dropped out of some of the key manuscripts. On the other hand, others argue that the words were added to harmonize the verse with such passages as Matt 26:41; Mark 14:38; and Eph 6:18. In general, the best reading is usually the one that is shorter, more difficult, and that can explain the existence of the other readings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The NIV translates the first word "Be on guard!" Other translations include "Take heed" (NASB, RSV, and NKJV), "Be alert" (NEB), and "Be on watch" (TEV). The Greek lexicon BAGD (p 143) provides the translation "take heed." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Theodore J. Weeden in his chapter entitled "The Heresy that Necessitated Mark's Gospel" (in *The Interpretation of Mark*, ed. William Telford, p 69) points out that the imperative translated "Be on guard!" (NIV) is "a Marcan key word" that introduces the four sections of Mark 13 that begin at vv 5, 9, 23, and 33. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The NIV and TEV translate the second Greek word "Be alert!" Other translations are "keep on the alert" (NASB), "watch" (RSV) (NKJV), and "be wakeful" (NEB). BAGD (p 14) translates it as "be on the alert." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The verb *grēgoreō* (NW: "watch") in vv 34, 35, 37 means "be/keep awake," or spiritually, "be on the alert, be watchful" (BAGD p. 167). The physical and spiritual meanings are combined in Gethsemane (Mk 14:34,37-38). It is a close synonym of *agrupneō* in v 33. The four time periods mentioned in v 35 are the four watches into which the night is divided in the Roman way of reckoning time. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

The first verse of our text unmistakably calls us to faithful alertness, while highlighting the folly of those who arrogantly claim to know the date. Reference can be made to modern heretical sects such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas. The numbers and symbols in Daniel and Revelation, and the signs in Mark 13, are not intended to reveal the secret God has reserved for himself. The message they convey to us is that God is in control, working judgment and salvation, and nothing will defeat his purposes. To insist on trying to discover the secret is sinful. The child of God leaves time in the hands of him who loved us and sent his Son in the fullness of time (Gal 4:4). V 35 of our text reinforces this. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

The two imperatives in v 33 reinforce each other. *Blepō*, "see" (NIV, loosely: "Be on guard") can refer to physical eyesight, but often refers to mental perception: "direct one's attention, consider, note, take care" (BAGD p. 143, 4.a). Many who see will not see, that is, will not understand the significance of the signs (Mt 13:13). *Aggrupneō* can literally mean "keep oneself awake," or figuratively, "be alert, keep watch."

Rom 13:11 is a close parallel to our verse. It's time to wake up! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

How should the faithful respond to the words of Jesus? Look! Watch! (*blepete, agrupneite*). Both words are commands requiring continual action (present active imperative). The uncertainty of “when” and the inability to discern the hour of “when” requires a continual expectation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

Regarding the command “Be on guard!” (literally “look,” *blepete*), in ch 13 (vv 5, 9, 23, 33) the word occurs four times, each punctuating a warning. “Look!” is followed by the cause for looking: first, look “that no one leads you astray” (v 5 ESV); second, look to yourselves, for “they will deliver you over” (v 9 ESV); third, look, I have told you before it happens (v 23); and fourth, look, “you do not know when the time will come” (v 33 ESV). Christ's four *look* warnings regard faith and may be applied as first, be continually guarding against false doctrine; second, be prepared to suffer for your faith; third, do not doubt God while suffering; and fourth, do not doubt in the promised return. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“Be alert!” (*agrupneite*, literally “watch!”) admonishes against doubting that the promised return is indeed coming, and coming unexpectedly. You will not recognize the time until it is upon you. *ouk oidate* [perfect] *gar pote ho kairos estin* [present]. In fact, seeking for the chronological moment (*ho chronos*) will lead you astray. You will not even know the *ho kairos*, the fullness of time for that day. Any attempt to discern the hour of Christ's return is fruitless. This is not how believers watch. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

the time - Translations of *ho kairos* include “that time” (NIV), “the appointed time” (NASB), “the moment” (NEB), and “that time” (RSV, TEV, and NKJV). BAGD (p 395) describes the Greek word as “one of the chief eschatological terms” and provides the translation “the time of crisis, the last times.” The Greek lexicon of Thayer (p 318) translates the word “the time when things are brought to a crisis, the decisive epoch waited for.” He interprets the term as a reference to “the time when the Messiah will visibly return from heaven.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Kairos, “time,” can be a general term for any time, or it can refer to a favorable time. Often it is particularly “the time of crisis, the last times” of the New Testament age (BAGD p. 395, 3.). Here and in Mt 8:29; Rev 1:3; 22:10, it has the narrower meaning of Judgment Day itself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

No one knows when the events Jesus prophesied will take place; therefore, Christians are to focus on the work He has given them (Mt. 9:38). Augustine: “Let no one then search out for the last Day, when it is to be; but let us watch all by our good lives, lest the last day of any one of us find us unprepared” (NPNF1 6:411). (TLSB)

Augustine is quoted as saying, “Let no one then search out for the Last Day, when it is to be; but let us watch all by our good lives, lest the last day of any one of us find us unprepared.” (TLSB)

Rather than wasting time and energy trying to determine the exact year or day of Jesus' return, which God has not revealed, we should focus on bringing the Gospel to people who do not yet know Christ as Savior and Lord. (TLSB)

1 Thessalonians 5:5-6, “You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.”

1 Peter 5:8-9, “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.”

Revelation 3:11, “I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.”

13:34-37 Rather than wasting time and energy trying to determine the exact year or day of Jesus’ return, which God has not revealed, we should focus on bringing the Gospel to people who do not know Christ as Savior and Lord. (TLSB)

13:34-35 Jesus relates a parable, found only in Mark’s gospel, to highlight the urgency of remaining alert. Jesus is the master of the house who “went away on a journey.” The noun *apodēmos* occurs only here, but the verb *apodēmeō*, “go away on a journey,” occurs in the Parable of the Vineyard and the Tenants (Mt 21:33–44) and the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14–30). Lk 19:12 adds that the master went away in order to receive a kingdom; we think of Christ’s ascension and session or enthronement at the Father’s right hand as his “journey away,” though he is still very much with us in Word and Sacrament. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

In all these parables the servants are to work diligently even though the master is absent, because he surely will return and call them to account. Those who remain faithful will be rewarded bountifully. Those who use the master’s absence as an excuse to do what they please, or nothing at all (the buried talent), will be punished severely. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

In the Parable of the Talents, different servants received different amounts of money, “each according to his ability” (Mt 25:15). So in our text, authority is given to each to do “his assigned task” (v 34). This ties in with Luther’s doctrine of vocation. We prepare for our Lord’s return by carrying out the roles and responsibilities given us—as husband or wife; parent or child; employee or boss; friend, neighbor, citizen; pastor or parishioner. No one is called to do everything; each is called to perform specific service in our particular station in life, and by doing so diligently, we remain awake and alert, ready for the end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

The pastor’s job resembles that of the doorkeeper in v 34 who guards against danger from outside and is the first to alert everyone in the house that the master is returning. Similarly, in Ezek 3:16²¹ God appoints the prophet to be a “watchman” who stands on the city wall, scanning the horizon for danger, warning the inhabitants, and turning them to righteousness. In light of Jesus’ charge “to everyone: ‘Watch!’” (v 37), every Christian is a “watchman.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 4, Part 1)

13:34 *it* – The “it” here is implied, and seems to have the action of the owner returning in v. 35 as its referent. In a larger context the implied “it” refers back to v. 4, when Jesus’ disciples request specific information on the destruction of the temple. Jesus answers the question about a more important “it,” the coming of the Son (vv. 21, 26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

This verse contains a short parable. The departing master (Jesus Christ) leaves, giving his servants authority to do his work (see Mt 28:18–20; Mk 16:15). He emphatically charges the doorkeeper to watch and keep watching (*eneteilato hina grēgorēi* [present active subjunctive]) until the unknown time of return. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

“each with his work.” While the servants were to be alert for the doorkeeper’s call, they each had their own work to do. This work could not be accomplished if they were perpetually scanning the horizon. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

man going on a journey – The absent householder is peculiar to Mark. A journeying master delegated authority to his servants and assigned each to his work, specifying that the doorkeeper is to watch. These details recall a familiar early Christian pattern of exhortation stressing vigilance and an application of the vigilance concept to the Christian ministry in terms of work and labor. The true servant will want to be actively engaged in his Master’s service when he returns. (Lane)

Here Jesus uses an illustration or a little parable. Notice that we have two subordinate participles and one main verb. The stress, therefore, lies on the verb. Most of our translations do not preserve this arrangement. The only two which do are RV (1901) and NASB. The former reads: "It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch." And the latter: "It is 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. (Buls)

Jesus is the "man going away." This denotes his Ascension and removal of His visible presence. Salvation is an accomplished fact. "Going away" does not mean that He abandoned the Church but that He made its work the responsibility of the Christians, as is explained from "in charge " and "his task." Christ has given "a task" to all His servants, and in particular to each one his own particular task. All Christians, be they men, women or children, have particular tasks and responsibilities. (Buls)

But the main thought runs from the last "to keep watch," in this context. Note that forms "to be watchful" occur three times, verses 34, 35, 37. It is the key word in this text. (Buls)

In illustration there is only one doorman. He is the first person the "one going away" would see and meet when he returns. In application, in the next verse, the idea of the doorman watching is not singular but plural. There is a sense in which all of us must consider ourselves doormen, the very first whom Christ will meet when He returns. (Buls)

A more literal translation of the phrase “puts his servants in charge” (NIV, RSV) would be “having given his slaves the authority.” Other English versions include “putting his slaves in charge” (NASB), “gave authority to his servants” (NKJV), and “leaves his servants in charge” (TEV). The word *exousia*, “charge,” is the same word translated as “authority” in Matt 28:18, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” The Greek word for “servants” indicates that they were owned by the man who went on the trip. The people in his house were his possessions. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

door keeper to stay awake – to Thuroro refers to the doorkeeper who is given the special responsibility to watch. Several commentators make reference to the common problem of slaves who habitually slept on the job while watching the main door to a dwelling. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

“The one at the door” (NIV) has the assignment “to keep watch.” Fritz Rienecker (*A Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, p 126) describes the doorkeeper as “the one who stood guard at the entrance of a courtyard which served several houses.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

13:35, 37 Verses 35 and 37 again repeat the command to watch continually (*grēgoreite*, present active imperative) so that you are not caught sleeping. The temptation will be to sleep. The command is given to watch. Like a doorkeeper who cannot possibly discern the master's time of return from circumstances around him, we watch for the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 4)

13:35 *stay awake* – *gragoreite* is translated “you watch out.” This continues the imperative urgency with which the passage drips. Jesus warns against being inattentive during the hour Roman watches of the night. Oddly, this is the time when most would rest from the labors of the day, but Jesus strongly encourages attentiveness to the task, even during the night. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

"Therefore" introduces the application. It means: "In view of the fact that the Lord has ascended into heaven and assigned to each Christian his individual task." Now the imperative is plural "you (plural) keep on watching." The stress is not on the last day but careful living each and every day. Like the disciples after Jesus ascended into heaven. Read Acts 1:12-2:47 and the rest of Acts for that matter. Christ warned them not to sit around wondering about times and seasons, Acts 1:7. They went about their daily Christian tasks and living. (Buls)

Back to Mark 13:35: The "because" clause explains why they should be watchful. Now Christ identifies Himself as "the owner of the house." He means that He owns every thing and has entrusted the "house" to the church on earth. (Buls)

grēgoreite (also vv 34, 37) suggests being roused to watchfulness. The doorkeeper's job was to stay awake watching (v 34). The same command is given us in v 37. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

The Greek verb *grēgoreō*, “watch” is to be understood metaphorically as “give strict attention to, be cautious, active; to take heed lest through remissness and indolence some destructive calamity overtake one” (Thayer, p 122). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The Greek word for “owner, master” is *kurios*, “lord, Lord.” In the New Testament the word is used most often in reference to Jesus Christ. The Septuagint uses the word to translate the Hebrew words *YHWH*, “Yahweh, the LORD,” and *adonai*, “Lord.” For example, compare the Septuagint of Ps 109:1 with the Hebrew of Ps 110:1. Robert Bratcher (*A Translator's Guide to The Gospel of Mark*, p 182) understands that the owner of the house “is obviously a figure for the Son of Man, but the text itself does not make the identification explicit.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

As we know not the time of our death, and no man can reveal it to us, duty and interest require that we should so live as to be always ready. Then, whether we dies suddenly or after lingering illness, no sooner shall we be “absent from the body,” than we shall be “present with the Lord,” beholding His glory and rejoicing in the fullness of His love. (CB)

in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. The four watches of the night used by the Romans. (CSB)

The last part of the sentence is illustration. The four adverbs denote the four watches of the night, according to Roman reckoning: 6-9; 9-12; 12-3; 3-6. The point in using "night" watches does not mean, of course, that Christ's return will necessarily occur at night. The point is twofold: the doorman would never expect the absent owner to return at night. And, even if he did, he wouldn't know in which watch he

would return. The point, in application, is the same which Jesus has made three times in this text, verses 32, 33 and 35: the day and time of day is totally unknown to mankind. (Buls)

Matthew 24:43, “But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.”

13:36 *come suddenly* – “If” introduces a negative purpose clause. The point of “comes suddenly” is the same as that of Luke 21:34 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.” The Last Day is not a trap. It will come “as a trap” which means “suddenly, without prior notice.” Strictly speaking, in illustration the doorkeeper was to stay awake twenty-four hours of the day. That is contrary to nature. Who could do that? But there was only one doorkeeper in illustration. In application Jesus says it would be awful if He were to find you (plural) sleeping spiritually. The faithful Christian is watchful even in his sleep. That’s why we can pray: “If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.” (Buls)

Luke 21:34, “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.”

Romans 13:11, “And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”

1 Thessalonians 5:6, “So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.”

13:37 *to everyone watch* – Jesus, the master orator, punctuates this discourse with the term *gragoreite*, “You watch!” This term is again used, tying the passage together into a complete package. . In a significant way, Jesus offers a reminder that this message is not only to his present disciples but also to all of Christ’ followers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

“And that which I say to you, I say to all: ‘Constantly be watchful.’ The antecedent of “to you” is the Apostles. The antecedent of “to all” is all Christians of all ages. “I say,” which denotes a formal statement, is used twice for emphasis. Note once more how forms of “watch” pervade this text: verses 34,35, 37. Nothing is so necessary as constant, Christian living. That involves the proper use of Law and Gospel. That involves constantly hearing God’s Word. That involves constant faith in Christ and love toward neighbor. (Buls)

There are two things over which we should not fret: (Buls)

- a. Our **salvation** is an accomplished fact. Forgiveness of sins and everlasting life are ours in Christ.
- b. The **time** of the Last Day. Only the Father knows that.

But there is one thing which must be our constant concern: Watchfulness. That does not mean that we live in fear. Jesus says at Luke 21 :28: “When these (signs) begin to take place, look up and lift up your heads because your deliverance is nearing.” And the Christian prays the prayer of Revelation 22:20: “Come, Lord Jesus.” But he lives his life by the faith in the Son of God Who loved him and gave Himself for him. Galatians 2:20. (Buls)

The rationalistic higher critics have done great harm to Mark 13. Some say that Jesus, as a child of His day who knew no better, thought that Judgment Day would come at the time of the destruction of

Jerusalem. Others say that originally Mark 13 was written as a warning that the end would come in 70 A.D. The former thought denies the divinity of Jesus and the inspired nature of His Word. The latter thought is in direct violation of verses 32, 33 and 35. Furthermore, in that case, verse 37 says nothing to people after 70 A.D. We shall waste no more notes on their stupidity. (Buls)

According to Mark 13:3, Jesus was speaking to Peter, James, John, and Andrew. Yet in Mark 13:37, Jesus indicates that the message was intended for “everyone” (NIV, NEB), for “all” (NASB, RSV, TEV, and NKJV). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

Remain alert to proclaim the Gospel and practice the faith. Augustine says, “When it tells us to watch for the last day, every one should think of [this] as concerning his own last day; lest haply when you judge or think the last day of the world to be far distant, you slumber with respect to your own last day” (NPNF 1 6:411). (TLSB)

The imperative “take heed, be vigilant” in verse 33 and the related call to “watch” in verses 35, 37 furnish a climax to the exhortations of verses 5, 9, and we. The stress upon vigilance sustained throughout the discourse suggests that the final call to watchfulness in verse 37 is not focused exclusively upon the last day, but like the previous admonitions, has bearing upon the continuing life of the Church during an age marked by false teachers, persecution and delay in the Lord’s return. (Lane)

13:32–37 In contrast to the fall of Jerusalem (vv 5–23), which will happen within a generation, no one knows the day when Jesus will return to judge the world (vv 24–27). Jesus exhorts us to vigilance and encourages us to use the available time wisely, proclaiming the Gospel for the salvation of others. Jesus promises to be with us always and has poured out on us His Holy Spirit for the work of evangelizing the nations. • “The world is very evil, The times are waxing late; Be sober and keep vigil, The Judge is at the gate; The Judge that comes in mercy, The Judge that comes with might, To terminate the evil, To diadem the right.” Amen. (TLH 605:1) (TLSB)