

## The Discourse On the Last Things Pt 6.

Mark 13:28-31.

Sunday morning, November 16, 2008.

### I. Another metaphor.

To help us grasp the significance of the flow of history toward the second coming of the Lord we have seen a few different comparisons.

A. We have seen the image of the shaking of the nations and of temporal earthly structures, so that the things that can not be shaken may remain standing. Hebrews 12:26-28. We compared it to temporary scaffolding surrounding a building while under construction. So is history; all scaffolding is temporary; only the building of God's Kingdom remains.

B. We saw the image of child bearing. History is pregnant with the Kingdom of God. There are pains and sorrows associated with this pregnancy. As the time of delivery comes closer there is an increase in the labor pains both in frequency and in intensity. Thus we understand Mark 13:8, "These are the beginnings of labor pains."

C. Now we are given yet another metaphor; that of the fig tree. Luke adds the words "and all the trees," showing us that we ought not to make too much of the fact that it is a fig tree. Any tree shows us the same lesson.

"When it's branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near-- at the doors!" Mark 13:28,29.

1. Here the Lord compares history to the buds on a tree during the winter season. Those buds are already there in the fall when the leaves fall of the trees, and they are "pregnant" with next year's harvest even as history is pregnant with

the eternal Kingdom of God.

But what happens to them during the cold dark winter?

2. A closer inspection reveals that contrary to popular notion trees do not sleep during winter. Those buds, which hold the promise of a harvest next year, continue to grow all winter. As long as the juices inside the tree are not turned to ice the buds grow, slowly but surely. So is history; it hastens to the new season of the eternal age, but in such a way that the casual observer does not perceive it.

3. A comparison month by month reveals the growth of the buds. By the time we get to February-March you can begin to see the progress week by week. In April you can see the progress day by day. In other words there is again the phenomenon of a speeding up as the day of the unfolding of blossoms and leaves comes closer. So is history as it ripens to God's eternal day.

### Application:

All three images show us the idea of a living hope. In each case there is a living and a looking toward the day of completion, and all the more as that day comes closer.

1. The builders look forward to the day when they can remove the final piece of

- scaffolding and reveal in plain sight the building they have been working on.
2. The woman looks forward to hold her baby in her arms and to show it to all the world.
  3. We all long for the unfolding of blossoms and leaves in spring, following a cold dark winter.

So Christian, you are to be looking and longing and living toward the day of God's eternal spring. The Jewish leaders were rebuked by the Lord for not discerning the nature of the times they lived in. Matt. 16:1-3. Let us not fall into their error.

## II. This generation...

“Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.”

- A. The word “generation” is used in the Scriptures in two different ways:
  1. It can mean all the people that are living at a particular time, in which case the Lord is saying that all the people living at that time would not die out before these things would happen. This was fulfilled by the judgment of 70AD.
  2. It can also mean the Jewish people generally speaking. This would mean that the Jewish people will be preserved in history as a distinct people until the kingdom comes. Deut 32:5, 20; Ps 12:7; 78:8.
- B. Remember again the double fulfillment principle of prophetic language.

The Lord may well have had both meanings in mind when He spoke these words.

## III. ...My words will by no means pass away.

These words go to the very heart of who the Lord Jesus is.

- A. He is the meek and lowly Jesus.
  1. “Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart.”
  2. He did not put Himself forward or promote His own cause Matt. 12:19.
  3. He chose despised Galilee for the bulk of His ministry.
  4. He chose lowly and despised fishermen for His disciples.
  5. He chose a servant model for His ministry; indeed He was the servant of all.
  6. He went to the cross to secure our eternal redemption.
- B. In the midst of this model of lowly servanthood the Lord makes some of the most outrageous statements. Statements such as not even the Pharisees in all their pride and conceit could make. “Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away.” These are words no lowly servant would ever take on his lips... unless they were true, and thus could be spoken without any conceit. Jesus Christ was all at once the lowly Son of Man and the Eternal Son of God; as such, statements such as these do not contradict His lowliness and humility.

### Application:

Let us associate with the lowly Jesus, thankful that He could make those great statements without conceit, so that we don't have to do so in our own arrogance.

Let us not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to. Romans 12:3

Let us in honor prefer one another Romans 12:10

Let us esteem others better than ourselves Phil 2:3.

Let us associate with lowly things; humble things Romans 12:16.

Let us not be too opinionated; wise in our own conceit. Rom 12:16