

CHAPTER 13

We have here the substance of that prophetic sermon which our Lord Jesus preached, pointing at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the consummation of all things; it was one of the last of his sermons, and not *ad populum* — to the people, but *ad clerum* — to the clergy; it was private, preached only to four of his disciples, with whom his secret was. Here is,

I. The occasion of his prediction — his disciples' admiring the building of the temple (v. 1, 2), and their enquiry concerning the time of the desolation of them (v. 3, 4).

II. The predictions themselves,

1. Of the rise of deceivers (v. 5, 6, 21-23).
2. Of the wars of the nations (v. 7, 8).
3. Of the persecution of Christians (v. 9-13).
4. Of the destruction of Jerusalem (v. 14-20).
5. Of the end of the world (v. 24-27).

III. Some general intimations concerning the time of them (v. 28-32).

IV. Some practical inferences from all (v. 33-37).

◀▶ MARK 13:1-4

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD

We may here see,

I. How apt many of Christ's own disciples are to idolize things that look *great*, and have been long looked upon as *sacred*. They had heard Christ complain of those who had made the temple a *den of thieves*; and yet, when he quitted it, for the wickedness that remained in it, they court him to be as much in love as they were with the stately structure and adorning of it. One of them said to him, “Look, Master, *what manner of stones, and what buildings are here*, v. 1. We never saw the like in Galilee; O do not leave this fine place.”

II. How little Christ values external pomp, where there is not real purity; “*Seest thou these great buildings*” (saith Christ), “and admirest thou them? I tell thee, the time is at hand when *there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,*” v. 2. And the sumptuousness of the fabric shall be no security to it, no nor move any compassion in the Lord Jesus towards it. He looks with *pity* upon the ruin of precious souls, and weeps over them, for on them he has put great value; but we do not find him look with any pity upon the ruin of a magnificent house, when he is driven out of it by sin, for that is of small value with him. With what little concern doth he say, *Not one stone shall be left on another!* Much of the strength of the temple lay in the largeness of the stones, and if these be thrown down, no footstep, no remembrance, of it will remain. While any part remained standing, there might be some hopes of the repair of it; but what hope is there, when not one stone is *left upon another?*

III. How natural it is to us to desire to know things to come, and the times of them; more inquisitive we are apt to be about that than about our duty. His disciples knew not how to *digest* this doctrine of the ruin of the temple, which they thought must be their Master's royal palace, and in which they expected their preferment, and to have the posts of honour; and therefore they were in pain till they got him alone, and got more out of him concerning this matter. As he was returning to Bethany therefore, he *sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple*, where he had a full view of it; and there four of them agreed to *ask him privately*, what he meant by the destroying of the temple, which they understood no more than they did the predictions of his own death, so inconsistent was it with their scheme. Probably, though these four proposed the question, yet Christ's discourse, in answer to it, was in the hearing of the rest of the disciples, yet *privately*, that is, apart from the multitude. Their enquiry is, *When shall these things be?* They will not question, at least not seem to question, whether they shall be or no (for their Master has said that they shall), but are willing to hope it is a great way off. Yet they ask not precisely the day and year (therein they were modest), but say, “Tell us *what shall be the sign, when all these things shall be fulfilled?* What presages shall there be of them, and how may we prognosticate their approach?”

MARK 13:5-13

GREAT AFFLICTIONS FORETOLD

Our Lord Jesus, in reply to their question, sets himself, not so much to satisfy their curiosity as to direct their consciences; leaves them still in the dark concerning the *times* and *seasons*, which the father has *kept in his own power*, and which *it was not for them to know*; but gives them the cautions which were needful, with reference to the events that should now shortly come to pass.

I. They must take heed that they be not *deceived* by the *seducers* and *imposters* that should now shortly arise (v. 5, 6); “*Take heed lest any man deceive you, lest, having found the true Messiah, you lose him again in the crowd of pretenders, or be inveigled to embrace others in rivalry with him. Many shall come in my name (not in the name of Jesus), but saying, I am the Christ, and so claiming the dignities which I only an entitled to.*” After the Jews had rejected the true Christ, they were imposed upon, and so *exposed* by many false Christs, but never before; those false Christs *deceived many*; Therefore *take heed lest they deceive you*. Note, When many are deceived, we should thereby be awakened to look to ourselves.

II. They must take heed that they be not *disturbed* at the noise of wars, which they should be alarmed with, v. 7, 8. Sin introduced *wars*, and they come *from men's lusts*. But at some times the nations are more distracted and wasted with wars than at other times; so it shall be now; Christ was born into the world when there was a general peace, but soon after he went out of the world there were general wars; *Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*. And what will become of them then who are to preach the gospel to every nation? *Inter arma silent leges — Amidst the clash of arms, the voice of law is not heard*. “*But be not troubled at it.*”

1. “Let it be no *surprise* to you; you are bid to expect it, and *such things must needs be*, for God has appointed them, in order to further accomplishment of his purposes, and by the *wars of the Jews*” (which Josephus has given us a large account of) “*God will punish the wickedness of the Jews.*”

2. “Let it be no *terror* to you, as if your interest were in danger of being overthrown, or your work obstructed by these wars; you have no concern in them, and therefore need not be apprehensive of any damage by them.” Note, Those that despise the smiles of the world, and do not court and covet them, may despise the frowns of the world, and need not fear them. If we seek not to rise with them that *rise in the world*, why should we dread falling with them that fall in the world?

3. “Let it not be looked upon as an omen of the approaching period of the world, for the *end is not yet*, v. 7. Think not that these *wars* will bring the world to a period; no, there are other intermediate counsels to be fulfilled betwixt that end and the end of all things, which are designed to prepare you for the end, but not to hasten it out of due time.”

4. “Let it not be looked upon as if in them God has done his worst; no, he has more arrows in his quiver, and they are *ordained against the persecutors*; be not troubled at the wars you shall hear of, for they are but *the beginnings of sorrows*, and therefore, instead of being disturbed at *them*, you ought to *prepare for worse*; for there shall also be *earthquakes in divers places*, which shall bury multitudes in the ruins of their own houses, and there *shall be famines*, by which many of the poor shall perish for want of bread, and *troubles* and commotions; so that there shall be no peace to him that *goes out or comes in*. The world shall be full of *troubles*, but *be not ye troubled*; without are *fightings*, within are *fears*, but *fear not ye their fear*.” Note, The disciples of Christ, if it be not their own fault, may enjoy a holy security and serenity of mind, when all about them is in the greatest disorder.

III. They must take heed that they be not *drawn away* from Christ, and from their duty to him, by the sufferings they should meet with for Christ's sake. Again, he saith, “*Take heed to yourselves*, v. 9. Though you may escape the *sword of war*, better than some of your neighbours, because you interest not yourselves in the public quarrels, yet be not secure; you will be exposed to the *sword of justice* more than others, and the parties that contend with one another, will unite against you. *Take heed* therefore lest you *deceive* yourselves with the hopes of outward prosperity, and such a temporal kingdom as you have been dreaming of, when it is *through many tribulations* that you must enter into the kingdom of God. Take heed lest you needlessly expose yourselves to trouble, and pull it upon your own

head. *Take heed* what you say and do, for you will have many eyes upon you.” Observe,

1. What the trouble is which they must expect.

(1.) They shall be *hated of all men*; trouble enough! The thoughts of *being hated* are grievous to a tender spirit, and the fruits of that hatred must needs be a constant vexation; those that are *malicious*, will be *mischievous*. It was not for any thing amiss in them, or done amiss by them, that they were *hated*, but for Christ's name sake, because they were called by his name, called upon his name, preached his name, and wrought miracles in his name. The world hated them because he loved them.

(2.) Their own *relations* shall *betray them*, those to whom they were most nearly allied, and on whom therefore they depended for protection; “They *shall betray you*, shall inform against you, and be your prosecutors.” If a father has a child that is a Christian, he shall become void of natural affection, it shall be swallowed up in bigotry, and he shall betray his own child to the persecutors, as if he were a worshipper of other gods,
Deuteronomy 13:6-10.

(3.) Their *church-rulers* shall inflict *their censures* upon them; “You shall be *delivered up* to the great Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and to the inferior courts and consistories in other cities, and shall be *beaten in the synagogues* with forty stripes at a time, as offenders against the law which was read in the synagogue.” It is no new thing for the church's artillery, through the treachery of its officers, to be turned against some of its best friends.

(4.) *Governors* and *kings* shall use their power against them. Because the Jews have not power to put them to death, they shall incense the Roman powers against them, as they did Herod against James and Peter; and they shall *cause you to be put to death*, as enemies to the empire. They must resist unto blood, and still resist.

2. What they shall have to comfort themselves with, in the midst of these great and sore troubles.

(1.) That the work they were called to should be carried on and prosper, notwithstanding all this opposition which they should meet with in it (v. 10); “*The gospel* shall, for all this, be *published among all nations*, and before the destruction of Jerusalem the *sound* of it shall *go forth into all*

the earth; not only through all the nation of the Jews, but to all the nations of the earth.” It is comfort to those who suffer for the gospel, that, though they may be crushed and borne down, the gospel cannot; it shall keep its ground, and carry the day.

(2.) That their sufferings, instead of obstructing their work, should forward it; “Your being *brought before governors and kings* shall be for a *testimony of them* (so some read it, v. 9); it shall give you an opportunity of preaching the gospel to those before whom you are brought as criminals, to whom otherwise you could not have access.” Thus St. Paul’s being brought before Felix, and Festus, and Agrippa, and Nero, was a testimony to them concerning Christ and his gospel. Or, as we read it, It shall be for a testimony *against them*, against both the judges and the prosecutors, who pursue those with the utmost rage that appear, upon examination, to be not only innocent but excellent persons. The gospel is a testimony to us concerning Christ and heaven. If we receive it, it will be a testimony for us: it will justify and save us; if not, it will be a testimony *against* us in the great day.

(3.) That, when they were brought before kings and governors for Christ’s sake, they should have special assistance from heaven, to plead Christ’s cause and their own (v. 11); “*Take no thought before-hand what he shall speak*, be not solicitous how to address yourselves to great men, so as to obtain their favour; your cause is just and glorious, and needs not be supported by premeditated speeches and harangues; but *whatsoever shall be given you in that hour*, whatsoever shall be suggested to you, and put into your minds, and into your mouths” (*pro re natf — on the spur of the occasion*), “that *speak ye*, and fear not the success of it, because it is *off-hand*, for *it is not ye that speak*, purely by the strength of your own wisdom, consideration, and resolution, but it is *the Holy Ghost*.” Note, Those whom Christ calls out to be advocates for him, shall be furnished with full instructions: and when we are engaged in the service of Christ, we may depend upon the aids of the Spirit of Christ.

(4.) That heaven at last would *make amends for all*; “You will meet with a great deal of hardship in your way, but have a good heart on it, your warfare will be accomplished, and your testimony finished, and *he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved*,” v. 13. Perseverance gains the crown. The salvation here promised is more than a deliverance from evil, it is an everlasting blessedness, which shall be an abundant

recompence for all their services and sufferings. All this we have,
^{<4117>}Matthew 10:17, etc.

^{<4134>}MARK 13:14-23

GREAT AFFLICTIONS FORETOLD

The Jews, in rebelling against the Romans, and in persecuting the Christians, were hastening to their own ruin apace, both efficiently and meritoriously, were setting both God and man against them; see ^{<5125>}1 Thessalonians 2:15. Now here we have a prediction of that ruin which came upon them within less than forty years after this: we had it before, ^{<4245>}Matthew 24:15, etc. Observe,

I. What is here foretold concerning it.

1. That the Roman *armies* should make a descent upon Judea, and invest Jerusalem, the holy city. These were the *abomination of desolation*, which the Jews did *abominate*, and by which they should be made *desolate*. The country of thine enemy is called *the land which thou abhorrest*, ^{<2106>}Isaiah 7:16. *Therefore* it was an abomination, because it brought with it nothing but desolation. They had rejected Christ as an *abomination*, who would have been their *salvation*; and now God brought upon them an abomination that would be their *desolation*, thus spoken of by Daniel *the prophet* (^{<2102>}Daniel 9:27), as that by which this sacrifice and offering should be made to cease. This army stood *where it ought not*, in and about the *holy city*, which the heathen ought not to have approached, nor would have been suffered to approach, if Jerusalem had not first profaned the crown of their holiness. This the church complains of, ^{<2110>}Lamentations 1:10, *The heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into the congregation*; but sin made the breach, at which the glory went out, and the abomination of desolation broke in, *and stood where it ought not*. Now, let *him that readeth this, understand it*, and endeavor to take it right. Prophecies should not be too plain, and yet intelligible to those that search them; and they are best understood by comparing them first with one another, and at last with the event.

2. That when the Roman *army* should come into the country, there would be no safety any where but by quitting the country, and that with all

possible expedition. It will be in vain to *fight*, the enemies will be too hard for them; in vain to *abscond*, the enemies will find them out; and in vain to *capitulate*, the enemies will give them no quarter; a man cannot have so much as his life given him for a prey, but by *fleeing to the mountains* out of Judea; and let him take the first alarm, and make the best of his way. If he be *on the house-top*, trying from thence to discover the motions of the enemy, and spies them coming, let him not *go down, to take any thing out of the house*, for it will occasion his losing of time, which is more precious than his best goods, and will but encumber him, and embarrass his flight. If he be in the field, and there discover the approach of the enemy, let him get away as he is, and not *turn back again, to take up his garment*, v. 16. If he can save his life, let him reckon it is a good bargain, though he can save nothing else, and be thankful to God, that, though he is cut short, he is not cut off.

3. That it would go very hard at that time with poor mothers and nurses (v. 17); “*Woe to them that are with child*, that dare not go into strange places, that cannot shift for themselves, nor make haste as others can. And *woe to them that give suck*, that know not how either to leave the tender infants behind them, or to carry them along with them.” Such is the vanity of the creature, that the time may often be, when the greatest comforts may prove the greatest burthens. It would likewise be very uncomfortable, if they should be forced to flee *in the winter* (v. 18), when the *weather* and *ways* were bad, when the roads would be scarcely passable, especially in the mountains to which they must flee. If there be no remedy but that trouble must come, yet we may desire and pray that, if it be God's will, the circumstances of it may be so ordered as to be a mitigation of the trouble; and when things are bad, we ought to consider they might have been worse. It is bad to be forced to flee, but it would have been worse if it had been *in the winter*.

4. That throughout all the country of the Jews, there should be such destruction and desolation made, as could not be paralleled in any history (v. 19); *In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of time*; that is, *of the creation which God created*, for time and the creation are of equal date, *unto this day, neither shall be to the end of time*; such a complication of miseries, and of such continuance. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans was very terrible, but this exceeded it. It threatened a universal slaughter of all the people of the Jews; so barbarously did they devour one another, and the Romans devour

them all, that, if their wars had continued a little longer, *no flesh could have been saved*, not one Jew could have been left alive; but in the midst of wrath God remembered mercy; and,

(1.) He *shortened the days*; he let fall his controversy before he had *made a full end*. As a church and nation the ruin was complete, but many particular persons had their lives given them for a prey, by the storm's subsiding when it did.

2. It was *for the elects' sake* that those days were shortened; *many* among them fared the better for the sake of the *few* among them that believed in Christ, and were faithful to him. There was a promise, that *a remnant* should be saved (^{<2312>}Isaiah 10:22), and that God would not, for his servants' sakes, *destroy them all* (^{<2318>}Isaiah 65:8); and these promises must be fulfilled. God's own *elect cry day and night to him*, and their prayers must be answered, ^{<2317>}Luke 18:7.

II. What directions are given to the disciples with reference to it.

1. They must shift for the safety of *their lives*; “When you see the country invaded, and the city invested, flatter not yourselves with thoughts that the enemy will retire, or that you may be able to make your part good with them; but, without further deliberation or delay, *let them that are in Judea, flee to the mountains*, v. 14. Meddle not with the strife that *belongs not to you*; *let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth*, but do you go out of the ship when you see it sinking, that you die not the *death of the uncircumcised* in heart.”

2. They must provide for the safety of *their souls*; “*Seducers* will be busy at that time, for they love to fish in troubled waters, and therefore then you must double your guard; *then, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ*, or, *Lo, he is there*, you know he is in heaven, and will come again at the end of time, to judge the world, and therefore *believe them not*; having received *Christ*, be not drawn into the snares of any *antichrist*; for *false Christs*, and *false prophets, shall arise*,” v. 22. When the gospel kingdom was in the setting up, Satan mustered all his force, to oppose it, and made use of all his wiles; and God permitted it, for the trial of sincerity of some, and the discovery of the hypocrisy of others, and the confusion of those who rejected Christ, when he was offered to them. *False Christs* shall *rise*, and false prophets that shall preach them up; or such, as, though they pretend not to be Christs, set up for *prophets*, and

undertake to foretel things to come, and they shall *show signs* and lying *wonders*; so early did the *mystery of iniquity* begin to work, ^{<S11P>2} Thessalonians 2:7. They shall *seduce, if it were possible, the very elect*; so plausible shall their pretences be, and so industrious shall they be to impose upon people, that they shall draw away many that were forward and zealous professors of religion, many that were very likely to have persevered; for nothing will be effectual to secure men but that foundation of God which stands immovably sure, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*, who shall be preserved when the faith of some is overthrown, ^{<S12P>2} Timothy 2:18, 19. They shall *seduce, if it were possible, the very elect*; but it is not possible to seduce them; the *election shall obtain*, whoever are *blinded*, ^{<S13P>} Romans 11:7. But, in consideration hereof, let the disciples be cautious whom they give credit to (v. 23); But *take ye heed*. Christ knew that they were of the *elect*, who could not possibly be *seduced*, and yet he said to them, *Take heed*. An assurance of persevering, and cautions against apostasy, will very well consist with each other. Though Christ said to them, *Take heed*, it doth not therefore follow, that their perseverance was doubtful, for they were kept by the power of God; and though their perseverance was secured, yet it doth not therefore follow, that this caution was needless, because they must be kept in the use of proper means. God will keep them, but they must keep themselves. “*I have foretold you all things*; have foretold you of this danger, that, being *fore-warned*, you may be *fore-armed*; I have foretold *all things* which you needed to have foretold to you, and therefore take heed of hearkening to such as pretend to be prophets, and to foretel more than I have foretold.” The sufficiency of the scripture is good argument against listening to such as pretend to inspiration.

~~<A13>~~ MARK 13:24-27

THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE JEWS FORETOLD

These verses seem to point at Christ's second coming, to judge the world; the disciples, in their question, had confounded the *destruction* of Jerusalem and the *end of the world* (^{<A13>} Matthew 24:3), which was built upon a mistake, as if the temple must needs stand as long as the world stands; this mistake Christ rectifies, and shows that the *end of the world in those days*, those other days you enquire about, the day of Christ's coming,

and the day of judgment, shall be *after that tribulation*, and not coincident with it. Let those who live to see the Jewish nation destroyed, take heed of thinking that, because the Son of man doth not visibly come in the clouds *then*, he will never *so* come; no, he will come *after that*. And here he foretels,

1. The final dissolution of the present frame and fabric of the world; even of that part of it which seems least liable to change, the upper part, the pure and more refined part; *The sun shall be darkened*, and the *moon* shall no more *give her light*; for they shall be quite outshone by the glory of the Son of man, ^{<3923>}Isaiah 24:23. The *stars of heaven*, that from the beginning had kept their place and regular motion, shall fall as leaves in autumn; and the *powers that are in heaven*, the heavenly bodies, the fixed stars, *shall be shaken*.

2. The visible appearance of the Lord Jesus, to whom the judgment of that day shall be committed (v. 26); *Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds*. Probably he will come over that very place where he sat when he said this; for the clouds are in the lower region of the air. He shall come with *great power and glory*, such as will be suited to the errand on which he comes. *Every eye shall then see him*.

3. The gathering together of all the elect to him (v. 27); He shall *send his angels*, and *gather together his elect* to him, to *meet him in the air*, ^{<5047>}1 Thessalonians 4:17. They shall be fetched from one end of the world to the other, so that none shall be missing from that *general assembly*; they shall be fetched *from the uttermost part of the earth*, most remote from the places where Christ's tribunal shall be set, and shall be brought to the *uttermost part of heaven*; so sure, so swift, so easy, shall their conveyance be, that there shall none of them miscarry, though they were to be brought from the uttermost part of the earth one way, to the uttermost part of the heaven another way. A faithful Israelite shall be carried safely, though it were from the utmost border of the land of bondage to the utmost border of the land of promise.

WATCHFULNESS INCULCATED

We have here the application of this prophetic sermon; *now learn* to look forward in a right manner.

I. “As to the *destruction* of Jerusalem, *expect* it to come very *shortly*; as when the *branch of the fig-tree becomes soft*, and the *leaves sprout forth*, ye expect that summer will come shortly, v. 28. When second causes begin to work, ye expect their effects in their proper order and time. So when ye *see these things come to pass*, when ye see the Jewish nation embroiled in wars, distracted by false Christs and prophets, and drawing upon them the displeasure of the Romans, especially when ye see them persecuting you for your Master's sake, and thereby standing to what they did when they put him to death, and repeating it, and so filling up the measure of their iniquity, then say that their *ruin is nigh, even at the door*, and provide for yourselves accordingly.” The disciples themselves were indeed all of them, except John, taken away from the evil to come, but the next generation whom they were to train up, would live to see it; and by these instructions which Christ left behind him would be kept from sharing in it; “*This generation that is now rising up, shall not all be worn off before all these things come to pass, which I have told you of, relating to Jerusalem, and they shall begin to take effect now shortly. And as this destruction is near and within ken, so it is sure. The decree is gone forth, it is a consummation determined,*” ²⁰⁷ Daniel 9:27. Christ doth not speak these things, merely to frighten them; no, they are declarations of God's fixed purpose; “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, at the end of time; but my words shall not pass away* (v. 31), not one of these predictions shall fail of a punctual accomplishment.”

II. “As to the *end of the world*, do not enquire when it will come, for it is not a question fit to be asked, for of *that day, and that hour, knoweth no man*; it is a thing at a great distance; the exact time is fixed in the counsel of God, but is not revealed by any word of God, either to *men* on earth, or to *angels in heaven*; the angels shall have timely notice to prepare to attend in that day, and it shall be published, when it comes to the children of men, with sound of trumpet; but, at present, *men and angels* are kept in the dark concerning the precise time of it, that they may both attend to

their proper services in the present day.” But it follows, *neither the Son*; but is there any thing which the Son is ignorant of? We read indeed of a book which was sealed, till the Lamb opened the seals; but did not he know what was in it, before the seals were opened? Was not he privy to the writing of it? There were those in the primitive times, who taught from this text, that there were some things that Christ, as man, was *ignorant of*; and from these were called *Agnoetae*; they said, “It was no more absurd to say so, than to say that his human soul suffered grief and fear;” and many of the orthodox fathers approved of this. Some would evade it, by saying that Christ spoke this in a way of prudential economy, to divert the disciples from further enquiry: but to this one of the ancients answers, *It is not fit to speak too nicely in this matter* — *ou dei pany akribologein*, so Leontius in Dr. Hammond, “It is certain (says Archbishop Tillotson) that Christ, as God, could not be ignorant of any thing; but the divine wisdom which dwelt in our Saviour, did communicate itself to his human soul, according to the divine pleasure, so that his human nature might sometimes not know some things; therefore Christ is said to grow in wisdom (⁴⁰⁵Luke 2:52), which he could not be said to do, if the human nature of Christ did necessarily know all things by virtue of its union with the divinity.” Dr. Lightfoot explains it thus; Christ calls himself the Son, as Messiah. Now the Messiah, as such, was the father's servant (³⁰¹Isaiah 42:1), sent and deputed by him, and as such a one he refers himself often to his Father's will and command, and owns he *did nothing of himself* (⁴¹⁵John 5:19); in like manner he might be said to *know nothing of himself*. The revelation of Jesus Christ was what *God gave unto him*, (⁴⁰⁰Revelation 1:1. He thinks, therefore, that we are to distinguish between those excellencies and perfections of his, which resulted from the personal union between the divine and human nature, and those which flowed from the anointing of the Spirit; from the former flowed the infinite dignity of his perfect freedom from all sin; but from the latter flowed his power of working miracles, and his foreknowledge of things to come. What therefore (saith he) was to be revealed by him to his church, he was pleased to take, not from the union of the human nature with the divine, but from the revelation of the Spirit, by which he yet knew not this, but *the Father* only knows it; that is, God only, the Deity; for (as Archbishop Tillotson explains it) it is not used here *personally*, in distinction from the Son and the Holy Ghost, but as the Father is, *Fons et Principium Deitatis* — *The Fountain of Deity*.

III. “As to both, your duty is to *watch and pray*. Therefore the time is kept a secret, that you may be engaged to stand always upon your guard (v. 33); *Take ye heed* of every thing that would indispose you for your Master's coming, and would render your accounts *perplexed*, and your spirits so too; *watch* for his coming, that it may not at any time be a surprise to you, and *pray* for that grace which is necessary to qualify you for it, for *ye know not when the time is*; and you are concerned to be ready for that *every day*, which may come *any day*.” This he illustrates, in the close, by a parable.

1. Our Master is gone away, and left us something in trust, in charge, which we must give account of, v. 34. He is *as a man taking a far journey*; for he is gone to be away a great while, he has *left his house* on earth, and left his servants in their offices, given *authority* to some, who are to be overseers, and *work* to others, who are to be labourers. They that have *authority* given them, in that had *work* assigned them, for those that have the greatest *power* have the most *business*; and to them to whom he gave *work*, he gave some sort of *authority*, to do that work. And when he took his last leave, he *appointed the porter to watch*, to be sure to be ready to open to him at his return; and in the mean time to take care to whom he opened his gates, not to thieves and robbers, but only to his Master's friends and servants. Thus our Lord Jesus, when he *ascended on high*, left something for all his servants to do, expecting they should all do him service in his absence, and be ready to receive him at his return. *All* are appointed to work, and some authorized to rule.

2. We ought to be always upon our watch, in expectation of his return, v. 35-37.

(1.) Our Lord *will come*, and will come as the *Master of the house*, to take account of his servants, of their work, and of the improvement they have made.

(2.) We know not *when he will come*; and he has very wisely kept us at uncertainty, that we might all be always ready. We know not *when he will come*, just at what precise time; the *Master of the house* perhaps will come *at even*, at nine at night; or it may be *at midnight*, or a *cock-crowing*, at three in the morning, or perhaps not until six. This is applicable to his coming to us in particular, at our death, as well as to the general judgment. Our present life is a *night*, a dark night, compared with the other life; we

know not in which watch of the night our Master will come, whether in the days of youth, or middle age, or old age; but, as soon as we are born, we begin to die, and therefore, as soon as we are capable of expecting any thing, we must expect death.

(3.) Our great care must be, that, whenever our Lord comes, he do not *find us sleeping*, secure in ourselves, off our guard, indulging ourselves in ease and sloth, mindless of our work and duty, and thoughtless of our Lord's coming; *ready* to say, He will not come, and *unready* to meet him.

(4.) His coming will indeed be *coming suddenly*; it will be a great *surprise* and *terror* to those that are careless, and asleep, it will come upon them as a thief in the night.

(5.) It is therefore the indispensable duty of all Christ's disciples, to *watch*, to be awake, and keep awake; “*What I say unto you four (v. 37), I say unto all the twelve, or rather to you twelve, I say unto all my disciples and followers; what I say to you of this generation, I say to all that shall believe in me, through your word, in every age, Watch, watch, expect my second coming, prepare for it, that you may be found in peace, without spot, and blameless.*”