

Intro: There will be **“wars and rumors of wars.”** There will be **“earthquakes in various places, and famines.”** **“You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. Brother will betray brother to death. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me. False Christ and false prophets will appear and perform signs to deceive the elect-if that were possible.”** Those are just some of the things, Jesus says, believers like us will have to face and endure as the world and time draw to a close. These will be difficult, trying, dangerous times for believers like us. Jesus knew that. And, so, he offered believers like us comfort and encouragement for such times. He lets us know that after these difficult, trying, dangerous times there will be relief for us beleaguered believers. That comfort comes in knowing that these times *will* come to an end and that **Jesus Will Come Again**. We have the comfort of knowing that Jesus will come again 1) **As the world draws to a close** and that Jesus will come again 2) **To gather the elect to himself**.

I. As the world draws to a close (24-26)

- A. The world will come to an end as we know it
  1. there will be signs in the heavenly bodies
    - a. winter is coming – certain signs tell us point this out:
    - b. the trees are without leaves; the crops are harvested, and the animals are migrating south to warmer climes
    - c. ominous and frightening signs in the heavens will portend the second coming of Jesus
    - d. Jesus tells us that **“the heavenly bodies will be shaken”**
    - e. and, as a result, **“the sun will be darkened”**
    - f. and, naturally, then, since the moon receives its light from the sun **“the moon will not give its light”**
    - g. at the same time, **“the stars will fall from the sky”**
    - h. with the Greek construction here indicating that the stars will fall from the sky one by one, one after the other until all have fallen
  2. that will point to the end of the world as we know it

- a. when all these horrifying things take place in the heavens
  - b. it will be apparent to all people
  - c. that the universe is breaking down and falling apart
  - d. that the history of the world as we human beings know it will be coming to an end
  - e. and that the old order of things will be passing away
  - f. when all this transpires the world will be plunged into a deep, impenetrable darkness
- B. Jesus will come gain
1. Jesus will appear in great power and glory
    - a. but, then, out of this deep, impenetrable darkness
    - b. Jesus will appear **“with great power and glory”**
    - c. shining forth with all his divine glory and divine power in full display
    - d. quite unlike his first coming
    - e. when he came in weakness and humility
    - f. being born in humble circumstances in a cattle stall and laid in a manger bed
    - g. taking the form of a servant and living a humble life of service
  2. Jesus will come on the clouds
    - a. furthermore, Jesus will be **“coming in the clouds”**
    - b. as a symbol of his majesty
    - c. like a king riding on his chariot
    - d. as the psalm writer states (Ps 104:3, **“He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.”**)
    - e. returning to this earth in the same way he returned to heaven after the purpose of his first coming was accomplished
    - f. just as the angels told the disciples at the Mount of Olives shortly after his ascension, (Ac 1:11, **“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.”**)
    - g. for all to see
    - h. as John prophesies in his (Re 1:7, **“Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him.”**)
    - i. and, again, this will be quite unlike his first coming

- j. when he was born in an obscure, small town in Judah named Bethlehem
  - k. and only a few people and cattle witnessed his arrival
- Trans: As the world draws to a close, Jesus will return to this earth once again. But, this time he will arrive with his divine glory and divine power in full display and his coming will be witnessed by all people. And, this time he arrive...

## II. To gather the elect to himself (27)

### A. The angels will gather the elect

- 1. the angels will be the gatherers
    - a. according to Scripture, angels are assigned numerous tasks
    - b. they are to serve the faithful
    - c. (He 1:14, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation,")**
    - d. they are to serve God
    - e. (Ps 103:20, "Praise the Lord, you his angels, who do his bidding...")**
    - f. another of the tasks assigned to angels is to be Jesus' helpers on Judgment Day
    - g. (Mt 13:39,49, "The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels...This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous...")**
    - h. on the Last Day, when Jesus returns **"he will send his angels"** to **"gather his elect"**
      - i. in a show of his great power and glory
  - 2. they will gather the elect
    - a. and who are these elect?
    - b. it is the group from every tribe, nation, language, and people of the earth
    - c. and from every era of the world's history from its beginning to its end
    - d. chosen by God
    - e. in his grace
    - f. before time began
    - g. to believe in Jesus
    - h. and to be saved eternally from the mass of unbelievers
- ### B. All the elect will be gathered
- 1. none of the elect will be missed

- a. when Jesus returns to this earth, the angels will gather these elect **"from the four winds"**
  - b. which means from every direction the wind blows
  - c. from every point of the compass
  - d. from N, S, E, W
  - e. and the angels will gather the elect "from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens"**
  - f. these words signify that all of the elect will be gathered
  - g. from every remote place
  - h. wherever they are
  - i. or wherever their bodies, bones, or ashes might be
  - j. and that none of the elect will be missed
  - 2. the elect will be gathered to be with Jesus forever
    - a. the angels will gather all the elect
    - b. and bring them to Jesus
    - c. so that they might live with him forever in heaven
    - d. as Paul told us in our Epistle lesson (1Th 4:17, "After that, we who are still alive and are left till the coming of the Lord 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.")**
    - e. and so that they might **"shine like the brightness of the heavens"** as Daniel prophesied in our OT lesson
- ### C. We are blessed to be part of the elect
- 1. only by God's grace and his working
    - a. we all are blessed to be included in that group known as the elect
    - b. but this is not something we have earned nor deserved
    - c. our continual sinning in thought, word, and action
    - d. is a daily reminder that we have a corrupt and sinful nature
    - e. and that we certainly do not deserve such a privileged position
    - f. and that it is only because of his great love and mercy
    - g. that God chose us to believe in Jesus
    - h. and that is only through Jesus' sacrificial death and the work of the Spirit in baptism
    - i. that we have been saved eternally
    - j. as Paul wrote in (Ti 3:5-6, **"...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.**

**He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior...”)**

2. we are blessed because we are part of the elect
  - a. now, since we are part of that group known as the elect
  - b. we have the comfort of knowing that at the End, when Jesus comes again
  - c. his holy angels will gather us together with all the other elected ones
  - d. and bring us to Jesus himself
  - e. to live with him and all the elect in heavenly glory forever
  - f. where we and all the elect will, in the words of Daniel, **“shine like the brightness of the heavens.”**
  - g. it is in this hope that we live our lives in these trying, difficult, and dangerous times
  - h. and it is in this hope that we bury our faithful loved ones
  - i. and face our own mortality

Concl: Our prayer is that Jesus would speed his return to this earth so that we can finally be rescued from this world and be gathered to him to live with him forever!