

Introduction

1. How would you answer this question asked by the Gallup Polling organization?¹
 - a. What's likelihood that world will come to an end because of Judgment Day or another religious event in the next century?
 - b. Very likely 23%, Somewhat likely 16%, Somewhat unlikely 16%, Very unlikely 41%, No opinion 4%.
 - c. Fully 61% of Americans doubtful that judgment day could come in the next 100 yrs.
2. Which answer would you choose? I'd choose "very likely."
 - a. Not cause I have any inside information, but cause Jesus could come in next 100 yrs.
 - b. And the prophetic events of the future could easily take place in 100yrs.
 - c. Once Bible prophecies begin to occur, they can unfold very rapidly.²
 - d. Israel became a nation so quickly, they called it the "birth of a nation in a day."³
3. Fortunately, no need to speculate. Jesus answered question when will return. (Text/Title)

I. After The Sign, vv. 28-31

A. Fig Tree Parable, v. 28.

1. Disciples 1st question, v. 4: *When will these things be?*
 - a. Mt. Olives famous for fig trees. Just budding at Passover. (Show Images)⁴
 - b. Most trees in Palestine keep leaves in winter, but figs lose in winter, like oaks do.
 - c. While almond tree blossoms in spring, fig needs greater warmth of summer.
 - d. When fig leaves appear clear signal that summer is near.
2. POINT: Just as buds on fig = summer season near, so sign = season for Jesus near.

B. Meaning Of These Things, vv. 29-30

1. Key to interpretation of parable is 2 phrases - *when you see, these things*.
 - a. Phrases occurred a few times before (vv. 4, 14, 23).
 - b. *when you see these things* = abomination of desolation + reactions to it, vv. 14-23.
2. For Jesus' disciples, *these things* = 70 AD; For us, *these things* = Grt. Trib. yet coming.
3. (Show)⁵ Looking at chart from last week, disciples = *short future*, we = *distant future*.

C. Meaning Of This Generation, v. 30

1. This helps us understand what Jesus means by v. 30.
2. Most abused v. in biblical prophecy. Many say *this generation* = birth of Israel in 1948.
 - a. *[The] generation spoken of . . . started on 14 May 1948, the day Israel became nation. Israel is the time clock of God thru-out history. . . . and the . . . generation will end 40 . . . yrs. later on 14 May 1988.*⁶
 - b. So, Jesus will return in 1988 because a generation is 40 yrs.

¹"Poll on Apocalyptic Expectations," *USA Today* /Gallup Poll, September 29-October 1, 1998. Accessed 12/3/04 from <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/1999/october/12040.html>.

² Biblical Studies Press. (2005). *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible*. Biblical Studies Press. Mark 13:30, note 39.

³ "Can A Nation Be Born In A Day? Celebrating Israel's Independence Day." Accessed 10/5/17 from: <https://www.oneforisrael.org/bible-based-teaching-from-israel/can-a-nation-be-born-in-a-day/>.

⁴ <https://pixabay.com/en/fig-tree-branch-leaf-fruit-plant-2160603/>. Accessed 10/5/17.

⁵ Abomination of Desolation, Three Fulfillments. <http://satan-evicted.com/images/sf02.gif>. Accessed 9/28/17.

⁶ Cf. End-Times Sermons file, p. 9 in *88 Reasons Why The Rapture Will Be in 1988*.

- c. **the apocalyptic times started 1948; will find culmination around 2001, probably no later than 2014.**⁷
3. **Generation = one's "contemporaries," all those living at a given time.**⁸
 4. **Dual Fulfillment** - disciples living Jesus time saw AD 70; believers living Grt. Trib.
 5. (Note: Jesus spoke words about 33 AD; Temple destroyed 40 yrs. later as said.)
 6. Whether we'll be here depends on our view of Rapture. **Reasons for Pre-Trib Rapture.**
 - a. Remember these verses from (**Show 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 5:9**).⁹ Wrath = Trib.
 - b. Revelation 6:17 says the Tribulation is God's wrath, which we are not appointed to.
 - c. (**Show Revelation 3:10**).¹⁰ Revelation 3:10 is promise to Church of Philadelphia.
 - d. 7 Churches represent all. Note promise = **preservation outside time of Tribulation.**
 - e. We are promised not just deliverance from divine wrath, but from **time period** itself.
 - f. **Hour of testing** = tribulation period in Revelation when God's wrath comes.
 - g. And notice it is for **those who dwell upon the earth** = clear reference to nonbelievers.
 - h. So the Tribulation is not for the Church; it's for the unbelieving world.
 - i. **No verse proves timing of Rapture, but Revelation 3:10 comes close.**¹¹

II. It's A Secret (32)

A. Day And Hour

1. Many limit **that day or that hour** to Jesus' 2nd coming following the Rapture.
2. **Day Of The Lord** - prophetic term for all of endtime events.¹² (**Show Timeline**)¹³
 - a. **that day** = common OT term for day of the Lord (cf. Jeremiah 30:7).
 - b. Paul said day of the Lord **comes as a thief in the night** (1 Thessalonians 5:2).
3. Reason comes as thief is because Father alone has set time.
4. **Nor the Son** = Jesus voluntarily accepted human limitations.
 - a. Tired, thirsty, death. Here accepted ignorance of the timing of future events.
 - b. **Acts 1:7 = It's not for you know times/seasons Father has fixed by own authority.**
 - c. If Jesus didn't know it, then clearly no one else can know it.

B. Why No One Predict Jesus' Return - No one knows when Day of Lord begin.

1. **The church has no dates, chronological structure, and nobody on the basis of Scripture can predict w/absolute certainty the century of the rapture of the church. There may be reasons for leading us to believe that the Lord may be coming very soon, but nobody on the basis of Scripture can predict w/absolute certainty the time of the rapture of the church.**¹⁴

⁷ Jack VanImpe as quoted in Personal Illustrations, *Prophecy, gone haywire*.

⁸ Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. Vol. 2, p. 172.

⁹ <http://slideplayer.com/slide/3530117/12/images/6/Reasons+To+Believe+In+A+Pre-Trib+Rapture.jpg>. 10/5/17.

¹⁰ <http://slideplayer.com/slide/6347684/22/images/70/Revelation+Chapter+4.jpg>. 10/5/17.

¹¹ **My old prof. Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost said this.**

¹² Grassmick, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 172.

¹³ <https://georgehawke.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/day-of-the-lord-figure-31.jpg?w=1400>. Accessed 10/5/17.

¹⁴ John F. Walvoord quoted by Jim Borrer, "The Perils of Poor Prophecy," *Golden Minutes Ministries Newsletter*. 4/96. Filed in Personal Illustrations, *Prophecy, date-setters, mistakes*.

2. When do they make **5 common mistakes (show 5 Mistakes of Date-setters)**.¹⁵
 - a. THE **LAST DAYS** MISTAKE: We've been in the *last days* for 2000yrs.
 - b. THE **CURRENT EVENTS** MISTAKE: Dangerous to read current events back into prophecy.
 - c. THE **WOLF! WOLF!** MISTAKE: Unbelievers have heard people "cry wolf!" before.
 - d. THE **THIS GENERATION** MISTAKE: No birth of State of Israel in 1948.
 - e. THE **DISOBEDIENCE** MISTAKE: Jesus clearly said NOT to set dates.

III. Suddenly (33-37)

A. Parable's Meaning

1. Background of the parable = apprentice system in the 1st century.
 - a. Owner goes on a trip & delegates jobs to the apprentices.
 - b. Owner = Jesus; Servants = believers (in every age); Night = unexpected.
 - c. Wealthy plantation owners did not travel at night because of robbers.
 - d. To come in the middle of the night would've been most unexpected..
2. Point: Tribulation events leading to Jesus 2nd Coming, come suddenly, unexpectedly.

B. Parable's Application (Show)

1. **Watch**, vv. 33, 34, 35, 37: 4xs. Jesus says **Keep awake; stay awake**.
 - a. Means spiritually alert; vigilant rather than lax or indifferent.
 - b. **Failure in the Christian life is rarely a blowout; it's usually result of a slow leak.**
 - c. It's the failure to watch over ourselves and the snares that so easily entrap us.
2. **Work**, v. 34 = own tasks and faithfully doing those tasks.
 - a. Use illus. of not having chores finished when father came home.¹⁶ (1 Jn. 2:28)
 - b. What would Jesus be displeased about in you when he returns?
 - i. Weren't saved even though had chances to be saved.
 - ii. Were living in sin/not get right. Fellow told me'd get right his time, but died.
 - iii. Planning get baptized, but never did. Getting committed to church, some day.
 - iv. Developing deeper fellowship with fellow believers, some day.

Conclusion

Finish with poem **What Would He Say?**

- 1) If He should come today and find my hands so full, Of future plans, however fair, In which my Savior has no share, What would He say?
- 2) If He should come today and find my love so cold, My faith so very weak and dim, I had not even looked for Him, What would He say?
- 3) If He should come today and find that I had not told, One soul about my heavenly Friend, Whose blessings all my way attend, What would He say?
- 4) If He should come today, would I be glad, Remembering that He died for all, [tho I had never received His call], What would He say?¹⁷

¹⁵ Jim Borror, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁶ *The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ*, p. 10 in End-Times Sermons personal file.

¹⁷ Grace Troy, "What Would He Say," quoted in Swindoll, C. R. (2016). [*The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1501 Other Stories*](#) (pp. 317–318). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.