

Sermon  
Rev. Lang Yang

**“When Will These Things Happen?”**

Twentieth-six Sunday after Pentecost  
St. Michael Lutheran Church  
11-18-18

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

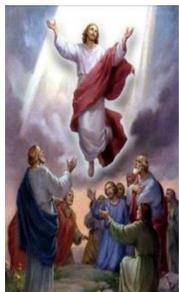
**Mark 13:4** *“Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?”* This is the world of God. (Cross reference – Daniel 12:6, Mark 13:3, 5)

Illustration “The end of the World” (Show Rev. Sun Yung Moon)



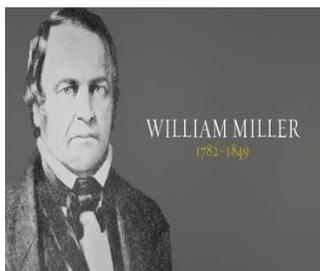
In 1978, a Chinese preacher by the name of Rev. Sun Yung Moon have a group of follower. In that year he predicted that the world will come to an end and Christ will return. He and his follower were waiting and waiting for Christ return. Days went by then week and months. Nothing happen. Rev. Moon though that he knew the answer to the question the disciples asked Jesus in today Gospel Lesson. Referring to the end of the world, they asked, “When will these things happen?” (Show Acts 1:11)

I. It’s only natural that people would ask that question. We know that the end will come. Jesus said



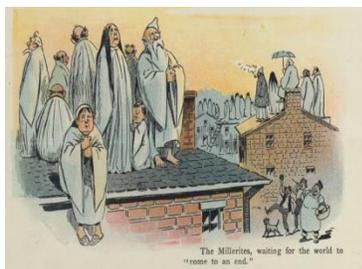
**Acts 1:11**  
“...*This same Jesus*, who has been taken from you into Heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into Heaven.”

“In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the mighty one and coming on the cloud of heaven.” (Matthew 26:64). After His ascension the angels told the disciples and said, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you in to heaven will come back in the same way you have seen him go.” (Acts 1:11). The Apostle peter added, “The day of the Lord will come like a thief; the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” (2 Peter 3:10). God assures us that it will happen. He created the earth, and someday, he will bring it to an end. (Show William Miller)



In 1831, a self-taught expert on Biblical revelations named William Miller announced his belief that the world would end in 1843 with the return of Jesus Christ to earth. His word spread slowly at first, but as the predicted time started to come closer the ranks of the "Millerites," as his followers had dubbed themselves, steadily grew... and their behaviour became stranger and stranger. In the year of the predicted end, many of these people gave away everything they owned, including farmland and homes, to help curry favor with the returning Christ. Some Millerites, driven to

distraction by the coming end, wound up in mental asylums hopelessly insane. (<http://anomalyinfo.com/Stories/1831-1843-william-miller-and-millerites>) (Show the Millerites)



As the end came, Millerites could be seen wearing white robes, and standing on high hills -- or in trees, or on top of buildings, each trying to be the highest so that they could be the first lifted up into heaven. Some of these hapless people even jumped from these places in their attempt to

ascend -- with predictable results. When the predicted date came, and passed, Miller didn't even blink an eye. He had re-checked his calculations, he told his followers, and was simply off by a few months... and so another prediction was issued, and the madness continued. And when that day came and passed, another prediction was issued... and then another. In the end, Miller retired away quietly but the movement he started rolled forward, splitting into new groups built on the continuing belief in the coming end of the world... and many of these groups still exist. (Show earthquake)



In our Gospel Lesson Jesus mentions sign of the end, he said, “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquake in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of the birth of pains.” (Mark 13:7-8). As we look around us, we see these things happening today. It appears that our nation and the world problems are getting so bad that the end must be near. (Show End Times)



But it's important that these things have been happening ever since Jesus walked the earth. There have been earthquakes, persecutions and famines, during the time of the early Christian Church, during the middle aged, during the Reformation and the Renaissance, right up to the present time. These things are nothing new. The cults and false prophets today are nothing new. They're just repeating the same mistakes that other false prophets have made for centuries. We may look at these signs and say, “It sure looks like the end times of which Jesus spoke.” But 100 years and

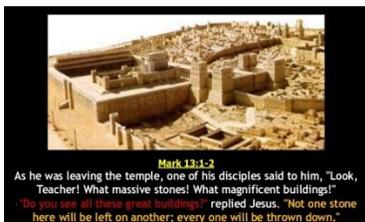
500 years ago and 2000 years ago Christians looked at the world around them and said the same thing.

- II. Part of our problem is that we fail to understand what the Bible means by the end times. Are we living in the end time now? YES! We are. But Dr. Martin Luther also living during the end times. The early church fathers - St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and other lived during the end times. (Show end of all things)



The disciples live during the end times. How could that be? Listen to what the book of Hebrews said, “In the past God spoke to the people of old by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2). “In the last days” it says, referring to when Jesus walked the earth. In his first epistle the Apostle Peter wrote, “The end of all things is near.” (1 Peter 4:7). Was Peter wrong? How could the end be near 2000 years ago when he wrote that?

The answer is that the end times began with Christ. The end times is that period between when Jesus came as a baby and when he come again on the Judgement. The end time began with the birth of Christ. When Jesus was born, it was the turning point in world history. All that God has said and done in the past was now being fulfilled in Christ and would be completely fulfilled in subsequent years. The end times began with his birth in Bethlehem. (Show Mark 13:1-2)



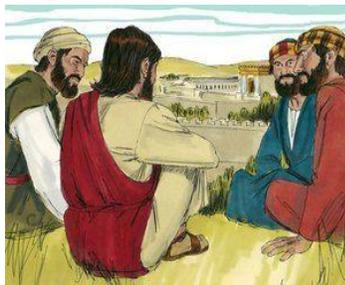
We see it in today's Gospel. One of the disciples pointed to the Temple in Jerusalem and said, “Look, teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” Jesus replied, “Not one stone here will be left on another, everyone will be thrown down.” (Mark 13:1-2). Do you know when the Temple was destroyed? It was destroyed in 70 A.D. By the Romans, about 40 years after Jesus death and resurrection. It happened

during the disciples lifetime. Yet Jesus spoke of it as part of the end times. We have been in the end times ever since Jesus walked the earth. **(Show no one know the day or hour)**



When will these things happen? When will the end of the world? I don't want to be a Christian unless I know and see with my own eyes what you saying are true? As Christians we often been ask these question when we reach out to other about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When will these things happen? The disciples asked that question, but Jesus didn't answer. He didn't tell them when. Instead he said, "No one know about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mark 13:32). We don't know when Christ will come again, so we're not going to find out until it happens. Just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man. That fast, that unpredictable.

III. It's just as well, we're better of not knowing. If we knew that the Lord would not return until say December 25, 2021, we be tempted to just neglect the Lord's work. We'd be tempted to live however we pleased, and then repent at the last moment. **(Show Jesus sitting on the Mount of Olive)**

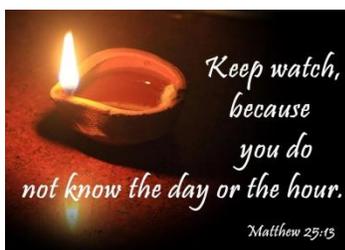


But not knowing the day or the hour remind us that we should be ready now. We should do the Lord's work while it is still day, before the night comes when no one can work. We shouldn't be concerned with "WHEN." As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:3-4). Jesus didn't tell them. They didn't need to know, and neither do we.

What then of Jesus word about earthquakes, famines, wars, and false prophets? Jesus mentions these not so we can figure out "WHEN?" Rather these events are meant to remind us that Jesus could come at any time. **(Show Revelation 21:4)**



When we see these things happening, they should tell us that this is an evil, sinful world, and that someday Christ will come to end it all and take us to a far better place. When we hear of earthquakes, famines, we should remember that someday he will "wipe every tear from our eyes, and take us to his eternal kingdom where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain." When we hear of earthquakes, famines, and wars, we should be thankful that Christ has redeemed us and rescued us from every evil or body and soul. When we hear of earthquakes, famines, and wars, we should resolved to stand firm in the faith, being strengthened by Word and Sacrament, because, we are "but strangers here - heaven is our home.



**(Show Matthew 25:13)**

All the false claim in the past and will be more in the future said that it is the end of the world. Christ will come this day or that day. Be careful. The signs of the end are not supposed to tell us "WHEN?" Rather, they tell us what to do - "Watch to the end and you will be saved." Yes! Someday the end will come. Knowing when does not make us ready. Knowing Christ - His love, mercy, and forgiveness - Does. Amen.

Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and mind in Christ Jesus. Amen.