

I. Mark 13:26-27 - The Son of Man Gathering the Elect

A. v26 - The Son of Man on the Clouds

At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. Mark 13:26

1. Again, many think this must refer to Jesus' return at the end of the world, but it does not.
2. Once again, Jesus is alluding to an Old Testament text, Daniel 7:13-14

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a **son of man, coming with the clouds** of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, **glory** and sovereign **power**; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14

- a. Jesus is clearly referencing Daniel 7:13-14
 - b. Daniel's vision is not about the end of the world, but the enthronement of the 'Son of Man'.
 - c. Notice that in Daniel the Son of Man is riding the clouds UP to heaven, not down to earth!
 - d. The focus in Daniel, and therefore in Jesus' words, is Jesus the Son of Man ascending to the Father's right hand to be enthroned as Lord of heaven and earth!
 - e. As the Son of Man, Jesus is enthroned with great power and glory, and has been since the ascension!
3. As the exalted King, the Son of Man receives worship from people of every nation!

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a **son of man, coming with the clouds** of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, **glory** and sovereign **power**; **all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him**. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14

- a. The Son of Man is exalted as the King, and calls people from every nation to be His people and worship Him!
- b. The power and glory of Jesus are seen in His calling people from everywhere to be part of His New Covenant people - and they have been coming for 2,000 years!

B. v27 - The Son of Man calls His people from the nations

At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷ And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. Mark 13:26-27

1. v27 is not a new subject but the continuation of the reference to Daniel 7:13-14.
 - a. v26 (Daniel 7:13) - Son of Man, clouds - ascension & session
 - b. v27 (Daniel 7:14) - The Kingdom is set up and people from all nations are brought to worship the Son of Man.
2. This is speaking of the New Covenant reality that God is now calling people from every nation to be part of His people - and they are coming!
3. The whole book of Acts is built around this vision of the Gospel going forth to the ends of the earth.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

a. This is the theme verse that describes the structure of the book of Acts.

1. Jerusalem - Acts 1-7
2. Samaria and all Judea - Acts 8-12
3. Ends of the earth - Acts 13-28

“Therefore I want you to know that **God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!**”³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Acts 28:28-30

1. The Gospel had been going to the Gentiles, but at the end of Acts, Paul indicates it will be sent in a new way to the Gentiles - and they would listen!
2. This was spoken sometime between 60-65 AD - shortly before the destruction of the Temple and the final abolishing of the Old Covenant.
3. This is the fulfillment of Daniel 7:14/Mark 13:27!

II. Objections and Answers

A. The ‘elect’ refers to Israel as God’s Chosen people

1. The context is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14, and in that text the point is that the Son of Man is Lord over all nations and people from all nations will worship Him. To restrict this to Israel would turn Daniel 7:14 on its head.

2. Mark 13 is about the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Old Covenant. In the New Covenant, the elect people of God is not Israel but everyone who believes in Jesus - both Jew and Gentile.

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the **elect**, that they too may obtain the **salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.** 2 Timothy 2:10

- a. God’s elect are those who find salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory - both Jews and Gentiles.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:28-29

- a. In the New Covenant there is no more Jew or Greek in terms of salvation and being the people of God.
- b. All that matters now is belonging to Christ through faith - this is what determines the seed of Abraham in the New Covenant.

3. To refer to the people of Israel as “the elect” is to undermine and deny the New Covenant!

B. The text says ‘angels’ will gather the elect

And he will send his **angels** and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. Mark 13:27

1. The basic meaning of ἄγγελος is a messenger
2. The Greek word ἄγγελος can refer to angels, supernatural heavenly beings

The **angel** answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. Luke 1:19

- a. This is the most common way the word is used in the New Testament
- b. Jesus could be saying that angels are helping the Gospel to spread to all the nations.
Then I saw another **angel** flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth — to every nation, tribe, language and people. Revelation 14:6
- c. The Gospel does go forth via spiritual warfare and perhaps this is what is being communicated - but it would be very unusual to speak of angels taking the Gospel forth in this way.

3. The Greek word ἄγγελος (and the Hebrew word מַלְאָכִים) can refer to human ‘messengers’.
This is the one about whom it is written: “I will send my **messenger** ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ Matthew 11:10

And he sent **messengers** on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; Luke 9:52

4. The Greek word ἄγγελος (and the Hebrew word מַלְאָכִים) referred to human ‘messengers’ about 50% of time, usually to refer to people carrying a message from a king or to refer to the prophets of the LORD.

Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the Cushite king [of Egypt], was marching out to fight against him. When he heard it, he sent **messengers** to Hezekiah with this word: Isaiah 37:9

The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his **messengers** again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked God’s **messengers**, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. ² Chronicles 36:15-16

- 5. Given the context of the quote of Daniel 7:13-14, the Old Testament usage for messengers of a King and for prophets/messengers of the LORD, and the New Testament emphasis on people (rather than angels) taking the Gospel to the nations, I think the better idea here is ‘messenger’.
- 6. But in either case, the idea is not a supernatural gathering (such as the rapture or something similar) but rather the proclamation of the Gospel which gathers people from every nation into the people of God.

C. Matthew 24:31 says there will be a loud trumpet

And he will send his angels with a **loud trumpet call**, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. Matthew 24:31

1. Since Matthew links the gathering of the elect with an angel and a trumpet call, some make a link with Pauls words in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:52:

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the **archangel and with the trumpet call of God**, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 1 Thessalonians 4:16

in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet**. For the **trumpet** will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 1 Corinthians 15:52

- a. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 does link an angel and a trumpet, and it is clearly about the final return of Christ at the end of history.
- b. 1 Corinthians 15:52 also links a trumpet call with the final return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead.

- c. However, in Revelation there are many angels sounding trumpet blasts that do NOT refer to the final trumpet at the final return of Christ to the earth. So just because there is a mention of an angel with a trumpet does not mean it refers to the final return of Christ and the archangel trumpet blast. In fact, most of the references in the New Testament are in Revelation and are NOT a reference to that.
- d. Furthermore, remember that Matthew 24 is NOT about the final return of Christ but rather about the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Old Covenant era, and that Jesus promised that all the events between Matthew 24:1-34 would happen during the time of THIS GENERATION.

2. The trumpet referred to in Matthew 24:31 is related to the use of trumpets in the Old Testament. Trumpets were used to call Israel to assemble and march and also announced the year of Jubilee in the Old Testament.

The LORD said to Moses: ² “Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the community together and for having the camps set out. ³ When both are sounded, the whole community is to assemble before you at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ⁴ If only one is sounded, the leaders — the heads of the clans of Israel — are to assemble before you. ⁵ When a trumpet blast is sounded, the tribes camping on the east are to set out. ⁶ At the sounding of a second blast, the camps on the south are to set out. The blast will be the signal for setting out. ⁷ To gather the assembly, blow the trumpets, but not with the same signal. Numbers 10:1-7

- a. Note that the trumpets were blown both to gather the assembly together and also to have the people set out.

- b. Thus the trumpet in Matthew 24:31 could refer to the trumpet telling the messengers to go forth, or it could refer to the trumpet which called God’s people to gather. Either of these purposes (or both) would fit Matthew 24:31.

Also at your times of rejoicing — your appointed feasts and New Moon festivals — you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the LORD your God.” Numbers 10:10

- a. The trumpets were also used to announce the great festivals of the Lord.
- b. They were especially used to announce the beginning of the Year of Jubilee - the great year when there was full forgiveness of all debts and everything was restored.

Count off seven sabbaths of years — seven times seven years — so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. ⁹ Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. ¹⁰Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. Leviticus 25:8-10

- a. Note that trumpets are sounded to announce Jubilee, which is related to atonement and the forgiveness of all debts.
- b. Also note that during Jubilee, the people return to their ancestral family property, which is similar to the “gathering” in Matthew 24:31.

c. It is also interesting to note that Daniel's prophecy about the coming of the Messiah in Daniel 9:24-27, which was referenced by Jesus in the discourse regarding the 'abomination of desolation', is built around the year of Jubilee in that it has seventy "sevens", thus being a 10 fold Jubilee. It appears that this is a way of saying that the Messiah will bring in the final fulfillment of Jubilee. Thus, it would make sense for Jesus to continue the Daniel references and use Jubilee imagery.

3. Jesus began His public ministry with a sermon based on Isaiah 61, which looked forward to the future great Jubilee that would be ushered in by the Messianic Servant of the Lord:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, ²¹ and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:18-21

a. Jesus used this as His text for His first sermon in His hometown, and the implication is clear - He is the Messiah and the Great Jubilee has arrived!

b. Thus Jesus whole ministry was the announcement of the new Jubilee. This great Jubilee was inaugurated by Jesus, and His messengers were to announce this to every nation under heaven. This is nothing other than the offer of the full forgiveness of sins offered through Jesus.

c. Since this is part of the New Covenant, it was offered prior to 70AD, but as with everything else in this passage, the time of overlap between the Old and New Covenant would be brought to an end in 70AD with the destruction of the Temple.

D. Thus Mark 13:26-27, and their parallel in Matthew 24:30-31, do not refer to the visible return of Christ in glory at the end of the world when the resurrection will occur, but rather they refer to Jesus' enthronement as the Son of Man and the gathering of people from every nation into the New Covenant people of God.